Metropolitan Tabernacle bulletin

April 1865

# Nichol's Series of Commentaries.

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## STOCK AND TORSHELL ON MALACHI;

AND

## BERNARD AND FULLER ON RUTH.

# COUNCIL OF PUBLICATION.

# A COMMENTARY

UPON THE

# PROPHECY OF MALACHI.

BY THAT LATE REVEREND, GODLY, AND LEARNED DIVINE,

MR RICHARD STOCK,

SOMETIME RECTOR OF ALLHALLOWS, BREAD STREET, LONDON.

WHEREUNTO IS ADDED

## AN EXERCITATION UPON THE SAME PROPHECY,

BY

SAMUEL TORSHELL.

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# RICHARD STOCK.

IF in writing our little Memoir of one so prominent and influential in his generation as DR HENRY AIRAY of Oxford, we felt that your wit might, not without warrant, take up Theseus's gibe, and charge us with an attempt to vault into the throne of the poet, who

> . . . . . 'gives to *airy* nothing
> A local habitation and a name,'

much more are we exposed to like quotation and playing with names—though we are shrewd enough not to indicate the sources—in trying under our late light to illumine the memory of the three Worthies who now claim our attention. Two of them—Stock and Torshell—seem to have shyly sought to be of 'the *hidden* ones,' such as reck little of the din of tumultuous praise, and rather shun than court the 'pointing with the finger' of Persius.*

Here, as in many other instances, it is well if we are able to be for the nonce an 'Old Mortality,' taking lovingly the chisel which Gillot supplies, and tenderly sharpening therewith an effaced date under the moss; or retracing from some time-stained 'register' an overlooked entry; or following up a memorial-fact from a quaint old title-page, or chatty personal allusion in some fervid 'use,' or link of relationship in a Will. Nor is this other than we might expect. Of a 'standard-bearer' such as THOMAS CARTWRIGHT, we look for an ample 'Life;' but as in our Victories on the Battle-field the commanders carry away the renown, so in the great sacramental army of the Church Militant, it were vain to hope for definite or large record of the 'privates' in the ranks.

Once for all, then, be it understood, for us and for our fellow-labourers who are to prepare after Memoirs in the Series, 'This . . . and nothing more,' is nearly the sum and substance of what the most painstaking and persistent researches yield in relation to the vast majority of those men, who by deed and book gave venerableness and grandeur to the by-word 'Puritan.' Not in human books but in 'The Book,' will their 'record' be found. Like experience constrains us to pay the same tribute to not a few of the 'Royalists' and 'High Churchmen' (so-called). Of them—such is the 'infirmity' and *bias* of Puritan as of anti-Puritan, of Nonconformist as of Conformist—must it emphatically be said,

> 'The *evil* that men do lives after them;
> The *good* is oft interrèd with their bones.'

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* 'At pulchrum est digito monstrari et dicier, Hic est.'

RICHARD STOCK, by his surname gave a handle to just such verbal quip and jest as we have indicated. Upon his 'monument' there was inscribed (besides others) these punning lines, by those who loved him dearly, the 'merchants of the city, who all but adored him,' says Masson :— *

'Thy livelesse trunk (O Reverend Stock)
Like Aaron's rod, sprouts out again ;
And, after two full winters past,
Yields blossoms and ripe fruit amaine.
For why, this work of piety,
Performed by some of thy flocke
To thy dead corps and sacred urne,
Is but the fruit of this old Stocke.'†

A volume of his posthumous 'Sermons' bears in like manner for its title, 'A *Stock* of Knowledge'—none the less noticeable that the joke was perpetrated by the JAMES CRANFORD who so 'vexed' RICHARD BAXTER. All which may be placed beside the grimmer humour of the Puritans in their denunciation of the '*Wren's* Nest,' and 'the *Kitchen* as more loved than the Church'—hitting therein Bishops Wren and Kitchin : a kind of wit to which even stately Sir John Harrington condescended.‡

Sometimes the name is spelled with and sometimes without a final 'e,' and in 'Truth's Champion'—which, *if it be his,* is perhaps, though the smallest, the best of all his writings,—it appears as 'Stooks.' In his 'Churches Lamentation for the Losse of the Godly,' to wit, the young John Lord Harrington, he himself uses 'Stock' in the title-page, and signs the 'Epistle Dedicatorie' as 'Stock*e*.' The name is also met with as 'Stoke' and 'Stokes.' 'Stoke' occurs repeatedly in the Tower-Records of the age of John ; and in 1370, a *Richard* de Stoke was Rector of Birdbroke (Middlesex), and another (if another ?), without the 'de,' was Rector of South Shobury, near Sheerness.§ A Robert Stock appears among the founders of 'New England,'—a contemporary, but we know not if any relative.‖

RICHARD STOCK was born in the city of YORK, and is placed among its 'Worthies' by Fuller, along with St Alcuinus, martyred Valentine Freese, his equally noble brother Edward Freese, and Bishop Thomas Morton ; as more onward, Dr Nuttal adds, the Nonconformist brothers James and Thomas Calvert—the latter, author of 'Mel Cœli,' a rich old quarto on Isaiah liii., which book-lovers covet in its rare occurrence,—and good Matthew Pool ; and still more recently, John Flaxman, Dr Conyers Middleton, Archdeacon Nares, and Bishop Porteous.¶

Master Richard's age on entering the University, as we shall see, lets us know that he must have been born in 1568 or 1569. Of his parentage and outward circumstances, nothing has been transmitted. His portrait in Clarke's well-known folio of 'Thirty-Two Lives,'** is that of a very noble-looking man, having the presence of one 'every inch a king;' but we suspect he was sprung of 'the common people,' though of a good Puritan 'stock,' no doubt, as the after-selection of his College shewed. If YORK be now shorn of some of its grandeur, as contrasted with the proud aspirations of its famous proverb,—about which Fuller has so much characteristic *persiflage,*—in the child-time of Richard Stock it was 'no mean city.' Its noble Minster rose then as now into the azure. At the period also, it had educational advantages to offer, and, as

* Life of Milton, vol. i. p. 41.
† Strype's Stow's 'Survey of London,' vol. i. b. iii. p. 200. The whole is given by Brook in his 'Lives of the Puritans,' vol. ii. p. 345.
‡ Torshell's Hypocrite, pp. 121, 122.
§ Newcourt's 'Repertorium,' ii. 63, 530.
‖ 'Result of some Researches among the British Archives for information relative to the Founders of New England.' By Samuel G. Drake. Boston, 1860. One vol. 4to, p. 108.
¶ 'Worthies of England,' edited by Nuttal, three vols, 1840 ; throughout vol. ii. under Yorkshire.
** 1677, 3d edition.

still, the classic Ouse meandered pleasantly, if somewhat Dutchly, through a 'fair country,'—a country all shimmering too with historic memories of the 'Roses.'

Our Worthy was 'thoroughly furnished with *country* learning,' the good Pastor of Bennetfink informs us;* and thus we are left to guess whether such 'training' was got in the city itself, or in some such 'rural' School as William Shenstone has immortalised. 'At the age,' continues Clarke, 'of eighteen or nineteen years, as most in those Northern parts in those times used to do,' he proceeded to Cambridge, 'where he was admitted into St John's College, and after a while was chosen scholar of the House.'† We are able to supplement this general statement with more specific details. The 'Registers' inform us that he matriculated as a pensioner 10th December 1586,—not a 'sizar' it will be noticed, therefore indicative of paternal means,‡—and that he was admitted a scholar on Dr Ashton's foundation, 10th November 1587. Further, it may as well be mentioned here, he proceeded B.A. 1590–91, passed M.A. 1594;§ and curiously enough, though not without precedent, was incorporated M.A. at Oxford 15th July 1595.‖

We are glad of these dates, inasmuch as none before us seem to have inquired for them. They are suggestive in many ways. First of all, as he 'matriculated' in his eighteenth or nineteenth year, we are carried back to 1568 or 1569 (as already noted), which tells us that his father might, from personal observation, recount the 'holy boldness' of martyr Freese, and the many memorable incidents of 'the wars,' when the 'Red Rose' became 'White' by losing so much blood, and the 'White Rose' red 'by shedding it,' as Fuller exquisitely puts it.

Turning to Cambridge again, the dates remind us (in the words of the loveable Author of the Thirty-two Lives') that 'at this time Doctor Whitaker was Master of St John's,' who, Clarke says, 'favoured' Master Stock very much 'for his ingenuity (=ingenuousnesss), industry, and proficiency in his studies,' and under whom 'a younger brother had a sizar's place.'¶ Whitaker had succeeded John Still and Richard Howland, who were as sternly Anti-Puritan as he was Pro-Puritan, and brought with him at once the learning, the piety, and the zeal of their predecessors, Thomas Lever and James Pilkington. Dr Whitaker's 'Mastership' is admitted by those who had no love for him or his doctrines, to have been 'the most flourishing and remarkable period in the history of St John's College.'** To have won and retained the regard of that foremost 'Master in Israel,' not less erudite as a scholar than winsome as a man, argues not a little in favour of Master Richard Stock, more especially as at the time, the venerable man had much of the 'contradiction of sinners against himself' to contend with. ††

By the dates also we are reminded that Richard Stock was contemporary in St John's Col-

* Clarke, as before, p. 61.

† *Ibid.* With reference to the entering at St John's, Baker, as cited by Bliss (F. O.), has this extract—'Ric. Stoc, Eborac, admissus discipulus coll. Is pro doctore Ashton, Nov. 10. 1587. Reg. Coll. Is Cant.' Here, it will be noticed, the orthography of the name is again changed.

‡ Milton was also a 'pensioner,' and Mr Masson supplies these useful explanations:—'It will be noted that eight of the students in the above list enter as "lesser pensioners," four as "sizars," and but one as a "greater pensioner." The distinction is one of rank. "All the three grades pay for their board and education; and, in this respect, are distinct from the *scholars*, properly so called, who belong to the foundation. But the "greater pensioners," or "fellow-commoners," pay most; they are usually the sons of wealthy families, and they have the privilege of dining at the upper table in the common hall along with the fellows. The "sizars," on the other hand, are poorer students; they pay least; and, though receiving the same education as the others, have a lower rank, and inferior accommodation. Intermediate between the greater pensioners and the sizars are the "lesser pensioners;" and it is to this class that the bulk of the students in all the Colleges at Cambridge belong. Milton, as the son of a London scrivener in good circumstances, took his natural place in becoming a "lesser pensioner."'—(Pp. 88, 89) Stock is a 'pensioner,' therefore may be assumed to have had parents in 'good circumstances.'

§ For these Cambridge details, I have heartily to thank C. H. Cooper, Esq, of Cambridge, who, from his overflowing 'Athenæ' collections, is not less willing than able to aid all engaged in like pursuits.

‖ Wood's Fasti Oxon, edition by Bliss, i. 271, ii. 82. It is noted that Henry Withers, D.D., of Cambridge, was incorporated the same day.

¶ Clarke, as before, p. 61.

** Memorials of Cambridge, by Wright and Jones, 2 vols. 8vo. 1845; under St John's College, p. 21.

†† *Ibid*, pp. 23–26.

lege—pre-eminently 'the Puritan's College'—with many of the most illustrious of England's names, cleric and laic—elsewhere enumerated.* Besides these, we learn from Fuller, 'so filled was the College with scholars, it was hard for one to get a study several (= separate) to himself, and in the days of our fathers (*i. e.* Stock's period), the students, when writing private letters, were used to cover them with their other hand to prevent over-inspection.'†

Introduced into this distinguished College during its most distinguished 'Mastership,' our Author kept in the front rank; and as with another Richard,—the 'heavenly Richard Sibbes,' who entered St John's just about the date of Stock's departure—after-years found his former fellow-students, who like himself had become 'Pastors,' dropping in upon him to hear him preach: of which more in the sequel.

Thus characteristically does Clarke sum up his student time:—

'During his abode in St John's College,' he says, 'even from his first beginnings, he was of eminent note for his unwearied industry and singular proficiency in those studies of Humanity that are as handmaids to Divinity, and help to lay a good ground for any future profession. So that his care was to intertwine piety and humanity the one with the other, that as web and woof they run on even along together, through the whole course of his studies. Nor was he only careful of this practice himself, but (according to that of the apostle, Heb. x. 24, εἰς τὸ παροξύνειν, "Observe one another to whet on to godliness and well-doing") he was no less forward to incite others to the like practice. Yea, not only to incite them thereunto, but to assist them therein, and to afford what helps he could (which well also he could do), unto any that were desirous, yea, or but willing to embrace them, so that many of his friends had cause to bless God that ever they came acquainted with him. In a word, whilst he stayed in the College, he gave beforehand, ere he came to it, evident signs of one likely to prove a skilful master-builder in God's work, and a winner of many souls unto God.'‡

Having passed M.A. in 1594, and been incorporated at Oxford in 1595,—in which year (4th November) his patron and friend Whitaker died,—Richard Stock gave himself to 'the work of the ministry.' This he did not without University 'temptations' being held out to him in the shape of advancement in another direction. For 'before he left the University he was designed to a Fellowship in Sidney College, then intended and beginning to be built.' But when this subsequently famous College was 'accomplished,' which appears to have been in 1598, 'he had then no mind to return to the University again.'§

The truth is, it had been to forsake a commanding position so to have 'returned.' For 'coming up to London, he was chosen Lecturer at Austin's in Watling Street; after which he preached twice every Lord's day at Mildred's, Bread Street, during the life of an old man who had the charge there: whence he removed a little higher to Allhallows, where he continued preaching constantly, one Mr Edmunds retaining the charge, but by reason of age and infirmities accompanying it, unable to officiate and discharge the place himself.'‖ So Samuel Clarke; but we suspect that he confounds the 'old man' of Allhallows with 'Mildred's.' Be this as it may, seeing that Richard Stock was full working 'pastor' of Allhallows for thirty-two years, he must have been associated with Mr Edmunds almost immediately on leaving Cambridge in 1594. For deducting 32 from 1626 (the date of his death), carries us back to 1594. Probably the 'Lectureship' was held along with the pastorate of Allhallows.¶

Before going to the Metropolis, he had resided for 'a space of time,' first with Sir Anthony

* Memoir of Dr Richard Sibbes, prefixed to his Works, vol. i. pp. xxxi, liii.

† See 'History of the University of Cambridge,' pp. 191–193.

‡ As before, p. 62.

§ *Ibid* p. 61.

‖ Clarke, as before, p. 62.

¶ He was 'pastor' though merely 'assistant' to Edmunds from 1594–95. He was finally instituted to the Rectory on March 8th 1610–11. It was on the king's presentation, the See of Canterbury then being vacant. Newcourt, i. 246.

Cope,—a famous friend of the persecuted Nonconformists,—of Cannon's Ashby, Northamptonshire, and thereafter with Lady Lane, of Bourton-on-the-Water, in Gloucestershire, being their 'chaplain.'* †

The *locale* of the ministry of our Worthy, and the period of it, are full of 'memories' to the merest tyro of English history and literature. As the parish church, and the church actually attended by a certain 'scrivener,' of whom the world knows something, Allhallows witnessed as illustrious a baptism as ever has taken place in 'this England.' That 'scrivener' and his comely young wife—Sarah Bradshaw—greatly loved Master Stock, and by-and-by presented to him a 'little infant' to be named John. Commonplace that! But add to it MILTON, and you have something to be remembered. For to have baptized JOHN MILTON is a distinction of Richard Stock not to be forgotten. There in the 'Register,' in his own quaint hand, stands the record:—'The 20th day of December 1608, was baptized JOHN, the sonne of John Mylton, scrivener.'‡ Twelve days old! Thus little Johnny Milton 'played' about the Parish of Richard Stock—ran past the 'Mermaid' all unconscious of one Shakespeare, one Ben Jonson, one Sir Walter Raleigh, and other immortals, within. Nor do we venture much in understanding that the good 'pastor' of Allhallows, who was so welcome at 'The Spread Eagle' by Mr and Mrs Milton, 'catechised' their auburn-haired and wonderful boy as he grew up; and perchance by his counsels inclined the parents to that 'purpose' of which many years afterwards their son thus spoke:—'The Church, . . . . to whose service, by the intentions of my parents *and friends*, I was destined of a child."§

Established at Allhallows, Richard Stock came as an 'angel' into the place. His early Biographer glows and burns with a fine enthusiasm in telling the story of his 'labours of love.' His words are touched with an antique grace and graciousness, that render bare and meagre anything of later utterance from us. We cull a few choice sentences. Speaking of his position at Allhallows, he thus quaintly writes:—

'He was not one of those rath-ripe wits that promise fair in the blossom but fail in the fruit; that, like comets, blaze brighter than the fixed stars for a time, but after a while vanish and come to nought, the matter of them being wholly spent or dispersed. But his proceedings in public were correspondent to his beginnings in private. When it pleased God to call him out, and to set him apart to that employment that He had ordained him to before, he proved a "painful" and faithful minister of Jesus Christ, a skilful and powerful dispenser of God's word. And if any proof hereof be desired, not to insist upon his constant and meanest employments with general approbation and applause of those that were religious and judicious, continued for so many years (as aforesaid) together—not a Sabbath intermitted wherein (if health served) he preached not twice, either in his own charge (where he was most frequent), or elsewhere abroad; besides his catechising of the younger sort in the week-days at certain times, and other such offices as to the pastoral function are necessarily annexed and are privately to be performed, also he was no less diligent than in the execution of his public ministry. Not to insist, I say, upon this (which yet were sufficient proof of it), as the apostle saith of the Corinthians, "You are the seal of my apostleship, and my letters testimonial" (1 Cor. ix. 2), so may it well be said of this reverend man of God; many Christian souls having professed themselves to have had their first effectual calling and conversion from him—the like whereunto few others could say at that time—besides the multitudes of those which have acknowledged themselves to have been edified, built up, and bettered by him, as the seal of his calling and of Christ speaking in and by him, and not verbal or vocal, but real letters testimonial of the efficacy of his ministry, through God's blessing upon the same.' ||

* Clarke, as before, p. 61; and Brook, as before, ii. p. 344.

† He was presented, in 1597, to the Vicarage of Alderminster, in Worcestershire, according to Nash (Worcestershire, vol. i. p. 15); but unless non-resident, which is improbable, it is difficult to see how *he* could have been there at the date named.

‡ Mr Masson, by reckoning only from the full institution in 1610–11, missed the above interesting fact, which renders absolute what he has put hypothetically.

§ Reason of Church Government, b. ii.; Works, iii. 150 (Mitford).

|| Clarke, as before, pp. 62, 63.

After Fuller-like comparisons of the apostles as 'fishermen, who caught many at once,' with succeeding ministers as 'huntsmen,' who, after 'much toil and clamour running up and down all day, scarce take one deer or hare ere night,' and contrasting the latter with the 'troops' brought to Christ by him, he proceeds :—

'Yea, more than that, many famous lights in God's church, and faithful ministers of his word, do profess to have lighted their candles at his lamp; yea, some of them to have received their first beginnings, not of light only, but of spiritual life and grace (without which, all light, be it never so great, is no light but mere darkness), from his ministry. It is no small honour for a man to win, if it were but any one soul—"he hath saved a soul," saith St James, as a matter worthy the glorying in. For to win a soul is to win more than the whole world besides is worth. But what an honour then is it to be, not a winner of a soul, but a winner of such as prove winners of souls; and so by winning of some one immediately, to be a mediate winner of many others by him? "They shall shine," saith he, "as the heavens, that instruct; and they that convert others, as the stars" (Dan. xii. 3). And how gloriously then, suppose we, doth this blessed man of God shine now in the kingdom of God, that was an instructor of those that are instructors of others, that was a converter of those that are converters of others themselves. Many, then, did this worthy man, as the Holy Ghost saith of John the Baptist, win unto God."*

Of the 'famous lights' who were thus wont to wait upon this so powerful and honoured 'ministry,' two may be named—John Davenant, afterwards the profoundly learned and holy bishop, and Thomas Gataker, equally learned and equally devout, the latter preaching his funeral sermon at last with rare tenderness and love, and with no little toil in order to be forward.† More generally Mr Masson in his Life of Milton, observes, 'There were young men, afterwards high in the church, who made a point of never missing one of his sermons.'‡ Still further :—

'There are two things, saith one, that make a complete man, integrity and judgment; the one whereof is but lame and maimed without the other, and yet in few they use to meet together; yet there was an happy conjunction of them both in this worthy man. One sign whereof will appear by the frequent practice of many, who make use of him for to be an overseer of their last wills, and craved his assistance by way of direction for the disposal of their outward estates (and all know how cautious men use to be in that kind). Another testimony of it was by those reverend brethren of the ministry, as well as others, who, either by letters or otherwise, out of all parts of this realm, did usually seek to know, as to one more than ordinarily able to give them satisfaction for the resolution of their doubts.'§

He had as one of his curates the illustrious BRIAN WALTON, a fact which will not be found in Archdeacon Todd's 'Life' of the great scholar. Both Clarke and Torshell dwell lovingly and with winsome iteration upon the high personal character of STOCK. In the 'Epistle Dedicatory of the Commentary now reprinted, the latter, with pathetic urgency, asks 'the flock' of the departed under-shepherd to 'walk' as 'worthy of *him*, to reflect honour upon him, to evidence their vantage and advantage from his life-long labours. 'As ye have made,' says he, 'a monument for him in your church, set up one also in every one of your lives; you shall thereby do him a greater honour than that stone-work (though otherwise a commendable testimony of your love and respect) can do him. Be ye yourselves his monument, his statue, his trophy, and as the Philippians were to St Paul, "his crown of rejoicing."'‖ As our readers will find on consulting the 'Epistle,' there is much more going to shew how the man was all that he 'taught,' how the ideal priest from Chaucer to George Herbert,

* Clarke, as before, p. 63.

† See 'Life' of Bishop Davenant, by Allport; and Gataker's grateful words in the Funeral Sermon, 1627, 4to. In the Epistle Dedicatory to Sir Henry Yelverton, he mentions that the sermon had been written after a wearisome journey, two days before the funeral. I may note here, that in the 'Testimony' prefixed to the sermon, Gataker gives the period of Stock's ministry in London, as 'by the space of well neere thirty years.' This leaves two years for his prior chaplaincies.—*Ante*, p. 9 and †.

‡ As before, p. 41.

§ *Ibid.* p. 63.

‖ See Epistle Dedicatory of this reprint, page 1.

and from Herbert to Dryden, was realised in him. When we read the last, we look on the very portrait of the pastor of 'Allhallows.' Let us pause upon it:—

> 'His preaching much, but more his practice wrought,
> (A living sermon of the truths he taught);
> For this by rules severe his life he squared,
> That all must see the doctrines which he heard.
> For priests, he said, are patterns for the rest,
> (The gold of heaven who bear the god impressed);
> But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
> The sovereign's image is no longer seen.'*

Thus what he was in the Pulpit he was in the street, and what he was in public he was in private. When 'settled' at Allhallows, 'he married a wife, yet surviving,' says Clarke, 'by whom he had three daughters.'† Neither wife nor daughters are further spoken of; but the same authority observes, 'His pious diligence and care were not less seen in the religious instruction and education of those that were under his private charge as children and servants; for whom his care was greatest to provide for their souls than their bodies, for their spiritual than for their temporal estate (yet not neglecting that neither), by bringing them up in the nurture and fear of the Lord.'‡

Besides being a devoted and more than ordinarily successful 'Preacher,' Richard Stock was of the stamp of John Knox, fearing not the face of man. Clarke having paid tribute to his 'integrity and judgment' as we have seen, adds, 'These two make him a complete man; but there is something more required to make a complete minister, viz., that he be able to speak his mind fitly (for what use can there be of a mute messenger?), and that he DARE DO IT FREELY; for of whom is courage and freedom of speech more required than of God's messengers? Nor was Mr Stock defective in either.' Then follow confirmations, which we cannot do better than adduce here.

> 'As for the former [*i. e ability to speak fitly*], how well able he was, not to express only, but to urge and press too; not to confirm alone, but to commend also that that he delivered, with clear method, sound proof, choice words, fit phrases, pregnant similitudes, plentiful illustrations, pithy persuasions, sweet insinuations, powerful enforcements, allegations of antiquity, and variety of good literature; that both the learnedest might receive satisfaction from him, and the very meanest and dullest might also reap benefit by him, and so as might well leave a deep impression in the hearts and minds of the hearers, they cannot be ignorant, that for any space of time heard him. In a word, in this kind he was such an one as many strove to imitate, but few attained to equalise him.'
>
> 'Again: because it is in vain to be able to speak to good purpose, if a man does not use his tongue; if (as one said of the *Eretrians*) he be like the sword-fish that hath a sword in his head, but no heart in his bosom; or like a cowardly companion that carries a weapon to ruffle with, but dares not draw or make use of it, though just occasion be offered. For this his freedom of speech, therefore, in reproving of sin, and that even to the faces of the greatest, whether in public or private, when occasion required, many even now living are able to testify, and some accidents made it more publicly known than his desire was that it should have been.'§

As a specimen of his fearlessness in rebuking sin and correcting error, it is recorded that he handled somewhat roughly the published 'opinions' of the great Ussher. We have the Archbishop's elaborate 'Letters' in reference thereto, and others' attacks; and it may be well to quote from them the more specific reference. The 'Letters,' which form rather a treatise than letters, and accordingly have been transferred from his 'Epistles' to his Theological writings by his latest

* 'The Character of a good Parson,' after Chaucer, Works, vol. xi. 395 (Scott's edition, 1821).

† Clarke, as before, p 62.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 65.

§ Clarke, as before, pp. 64, 65.

editor, Dr Elrington, are entitled severally, 'The True Intent and Extent of Christ's Death and Satisfaction;' and 'An Answer of the Archbishop of Armagh to some exceptions taken against his aforesaid Letter.' It is in the latter that Stock is noticed. Having refuted certain (alleged) errors of Culverwell, he proceeds: 'Now, for Mr Stock's public opposition in the pulpit, I can hardly be induced to believe that he aimed at me therein; if he did, I must needs say he was deceived, when he reckoned me amongst those good men who made the universality of all the elect, and all men, to be one.'* He then vindicates his true opinions and statements with great fulness and perspicacity; and so as when Stock read the 'answer,' he must have been satisfied that their 'word-war' was a war of words, if we may judge from his own (if it be his) *posthumous* 'Truth's Champion,' which maintains the very sentiments of the Archbishop, and if anything rather widening than narrowing them. Another example of his 'faithfulness' is furnished in the old folio. Says Clarke: 'In his younger days being called to preach at Paul's Cross, he dealt somewhat plainly and freely in taxing some abuses in the city in unequal ratings, whereby the meaner sort were over-burdened, whilst the rich and great ones escaped with more ease. This was ill taken by many of them, who checked him as over-rash for dealing in such matters, calling him a 'green-head;' but in his latter days, being called to preach at the Lord Mayor's election, he fell again upon the same subject, and told them a grey-head spake now what a 'green-head' had done formerly.†

Two of the leading *tests* of the true Minister at this period were, his respect or disrespect for 'The Sabbath,' in those days of 'Book of Sports' and Sunday 'May-poles,' and his fidelity or slackness in 'catechising.' In both of these Stock stands firm. For the former he was very zealous and earnest, and this appeared especially in his persistency in seeking a 'reformation of some profanations' of it, 'wherein he prevailed also for the alteration of something offensive in that kind, as well with the main body of the city as with some particular societys; as for their meetings upon St Thomas's day. He persuaded also some of the companies to put off their solemn festivals from Mondays to Tuesdays, that so the Lord's day might not be profaned by their preparations for those feasts.' Of the latter he was anxiously careful: 'His prudence, also, appeared in his order of catechising the young persons of his parish; by examining them apart, the youths on one day, and the maids on another; the riper and forwarder first, in the presence of the ruder and rawer; and the ruder and rawer apart by themselves, when the former were departed, that so they might reap what fruit they could by hearing the others, and yet might receive no discouragement by being heard of them.'‡

From all 'testimonies,' and from the utter absence in his case of even the 'revilings' which many of his equally excellent and venerable contemporaries had to endure, it is plain that RICHARD STOCK was a man of mark, of splendid influence, and of inestimable goodness; which, after all, is the highest style of greatness, measured in the 'balances of the *sanctuary*.' His entire 'Life' was self-evidently a 'ministry,' a service—he, in not less beautiful than rare humility, seeking to be but a 'voice' for Christ.

Thus he 'lived,' and thus he 'died,' by no means an 'old man,' for he was only in his fifty-eighth or fifty-ninth year. And so the Pastor of Bennet-Fink may fitly close our Memoir of one, concerning whom, more than most, Hanani's Bible character is deserved, '*He was a faithful man, and feared God above many*' (Neh. vii. 2):—

'To draw to an end,' says Clarke, 'together with his end; the end of his labours, but the beginning of his rest; the end of his work, but receipt of his reward. In the aforementioned and such like employments,

* Works of Ussher, vol. xii. pp. 566–571.
† Clarke, as before, p. 65.
‡ Ibid. Cf. also Fuller, 'Worthies,' as before.

public and private, he spent his time. He spent his strength like a torch or taper, wasting and consuming himself for the profit and benefit of others; having his work with God then, and his reward for it from God afterwards. And for these employments' sake was it principally that he desired recovery of health and strength: unto the performance whereof also (though therein injurious to himself and contrary to his own desires) he oft strained himself, and that in the midst of his infirmity and weakness, not to uncertain hazard only, but to evident impeaching and impairing of either. "What is the sign," saith Hezekiah, when he was promised recovery, "that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?" as desiring continuance of life, and recovery of health, for no one end more than that. And therefore, also, was it that this worthy man was desirous of recovering, that he might repair to God's house again, and that he might return to God's work again. To which purpose the very last Lord's day before his decease, having after many relapses recovered a little strength, he made shift to get out to a neighbour's congregation, there to join with God's people in public performance of such solemn service of God as this day is usually spent and employed in. And having held out with them to the end in both parts of the day, he rejoiced much therein that he was able so to do, the rather because he thereby conceived some good hope that he should be strong enough ere long to return to his wonted work and employment again. But the Lord saw it better (for his will appears by his work) to put an end to his incessant labours here, and to translate him to the place of his endless rest elsewhere, and that upon the 20th day of April A.D. 1626, having been Preacher at Allhallows, Bread Street, during the space of thirty-two years, where he was an example to his people "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy iv. 12). But as one saith, An exact face is seldom drawn but with much disadvantage; so neither is his character. So that we may well say, as one doth of Basil, "There wanted but his own tongue to commend him with."' * †

Of the Writings of Richard Stock, only two slight tractates were published by himself, viz.: (1.) The Doctrine and Use of Repentance, 1610: (2.) Sermon on death of Lord Harrington, 1614. Thus, in an age of 'writing' and 'printing' very 'many books,' he was singularly reticent. Even his posthumous productions were few. They are the 'Commentary' now reprinted, and a quarto volume of Sermon-Lectures already noticed, of which this is the full title-page:—'A STOCK of Divine Knowledge. Being a lively description of the Divine Nature, or the Divine Essence, Attributes and Trinity particularly explained and profitably applied. The first shewing us what God is: the second what we ought to be. By the late learned and laborious Preacher and worthy instrument of God's glory, Richard Stock, sometimes Rector of Allhallows, Bread-street in London.' 1641.‡

His 'Repentance' is plain but penetrating, with now and again barbed sentences that must have gone straight to the mark when delivered. His Funeral-Sermon for the youthful Lord Harrington is a very tender and finely touched discourse. The Fount of Tears must have been stirred to its very depths in the speaker; and the effect on the auditory, with, as it would

* Clarke, as before, pp. 65, 66.

† Anthony a-Wood, in his Fasti Oxon., blunders egregiously in regard to the date of Stock's death. He antedates it by ten years. In his half-heathen way he says:—'He gave way to fate 20th April 1616;' and curiously enough, Dr Bliss, with uncharacteristic inaccuracy, allows the error to go uncorrected, and adds a foot-note which only makes the confusion worse. The real date, 1626, puts all right. Fuller, who is given by Wood as his authority, gives 1626, not 1616.

It will be noticed that Torshell, in his 'Preface' to his 'Malachi,' under date 1641, speaks of Stock as dead fifteen years, which goes back to 1626; besides the monumental inscription. But with all Wood's atribiliousness and odd blunders, we owe much to his laborious diligence. The following is in the 'Register' of Allhallows:—'The 24th of April 1626 was buried Mr Richard Stocke, parson of the parish.' No doubt Mr Milton sen., and John (then eighteen, and in London), attended the funeral. Lord Bacon died just two weeks before Stock (9th April).

‡ The tractate on Repentance we have not now before us, but the following is the full title-page of the Sermon for Lord Harrington, of whom he gives a singularly interesting account, vouching for unexaggeration with almost morbid sensitiveness:—The Churches Lamentation for the losse of the godly: deliuered in a Sermon at the funeral of that truly noble, and most hopefull young Gentleman, Iohn Lord Harrington, Baron of Exton, Knight of the noble order of the Bath, and his maiesties Lieutenant of the County of Rutland, at Exton in Rutland, the last day of March 1614. Together with a patterne of Piety, and the power of godliness expressed in his life and death, who yeelded to Nature the 27. of February 1613, when he wanted two moneths of 22 years of his age. By Richard Stock, Pastor of Allhallows, Breadstreet in London. London, Printed by Iohn Beale, 1614. 12mo.' Prefixed to Epistle Dedicatory is a woodcut portrait of the young Lord: a noble Baconian head. The 'Epistle Dedicatory is written with affectionate familiarity to the mother and sisters of the deceased. Various well-meant verses are attached and prefixed.

appear, the coffined dead in state before them, must have been overwhelming. There are some vivid 'similes' in this pathetic Sermon, occasional flashes of that light which the Poet fetches down from the empyrean, and appeals

'Clear and ringing as a silver bell.'

The 'Stock of Knowledge' consists of acute but usually laboured discussions of the successive 'Attributes' of God; scarcely comparable with the all too little known 'Philo-Theologica' of Henry Church, much less with Stephen Charnock's magnificent 'Discourses.' But now and again you light upon a happy distinction, a well-put answer to an objection equally well-put, an apposite quotation from a Father, and good solid sense. Solidity, indeed, is *the* characteristic of the book. As the Sermon-Lectures were delivered from Sabbath to Sabbath, we are impressed with the intellectual grasp demanded from the hearers. They had better suited the professor's chair than the pulpit, it seems to us.

To our apprehension, the little 18mo, 'Truth's Champion,' which is ascribed to him by Anthony a-Wood and by Brook, is by far the most valuable book bearing his name. In our opinion, it states some of the deepest problems of Theology and Philosophy with uncommon acumen; with pellucid distinctness of thought and wording; with mingled boldness and caution, breadth and depth; and, above all, presents a very jewel-case of unspeakable Scriptural consolation to doubting, harassed, groping inquirers. Few know it; but we who do heartily commend it to every Reader who can put his hands upon it, not as in all respects perfect, but as a priceless contribution to the solution of ever-renewed problems.

But while we thus notice here 'Truth's Champion,' it is only right that we should express our doubts, almost certainty of the contrary, of our Stock being its author. The following is its full title-page:—

'Truth's Champion: Wherein are made plain these particulars: 1. That Christ died for all men. 2. Of his dying for all to save all. 3. Of his power given out to all. 4. Of Predestination. 5. Of Election. 6. Of Free Will. 7. Of falling away. 8. Of original sin. 9. Of Baptizing or Baptism. 10. Of the Ministry. 11. Of Love. 12. Of those that hold, That God hath appointed or destinated unavoidably all the actions of men, and the sad effects that follow. 13. Of the man Adam and the man Christ. With Answers to divers Objections upon the same. An occasional word to the Reader, and inlarged by the Author, Richard Stooks, Minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. London, Printed for Martha Whittington, and are to be sold at the Blew Anchor in Cornhill, 1651.' (18mo.)

From this title-page it will be seen that the little volume was not published until 1651; and notwithstanding that the 'Epistle Dedicatory' and 'To the Reader' bear the inititals R. S. (the former misprinted B. S. for R. S.), and have all the indications of proceeding from one then alive, *there is no intimation whatever that the volume was edited.* '*Inlarged* by the Author' would seem to indicate a prior edition; but there was none such. Finally, 'Stooks' for 'Stocke' is scarcely probable. There was a Richard Stock rector of Kirk-Eaton in Yorkshire, where 'he left a standing monument of his piety and charity, by the erection and endowment of a free school.' Could he be the author? It is just possible, spite of the orthography 'Stooks.'

The 'Commentary' on Malachi is rather for the Scholar and Divine than the ordinary Reader. Many ministers can bear testimony to its great value, as furnishing aids and hints for the exposition of this important and 'hard' book. There are many excellent exegetical passages of difficult Hebrew, original tracing out of the finer filaments of the thought, wonderful faculty of educing or deducing 'doctrine,' and intense and electric 'application.' If some of the latter are out of proportion, there is with the huge elephantine head also the splendid ivory of the tusks. It cannot be denied that, if viewed merely as an exposition of Malachi, there is too much of it. It had received, no doubt, considerable condensation if the Author

had himself prepared it for publication. But the doctrines, and reasons, and uses, are in themselves valuable truth, though they may not be always strictly *the* truth taught in the particular passage from which they are deduced.*

While in all candour we thus state our estimate of the present reprint, we need scarcely add that, spite of those abatements, this 'Commentary' on the Last of the Old Testament Prophets has outweighing merits to give it title to an honoured place in the Series. In combination with the 'Exercitation' of Torshell, it stands alone for its learning, its exhaustiveness, its fulness of Scriptural allusion and application, its perspicuous statements of doctrine, and its evangelical spirit. And so we pass on from the Baptizer of the 'twelve days old' JOHN MILTON, and his father's and mother's and his own early 'Pastor' and Friend, RICHARD STOCK, to SAMUEL TORSHELL.

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

KINROSS.

* Stock's over-quotations from the Fathers were objected to during his life. Clarke thus gives us his 'Apology:'—'In his public ministry,' he says, 'his usual manner was upon occasions to quote the sayings of many of the Fathers; which some taking exceptions at, he thus apologized for himself: "If any," saith he, "take exceptions at my alleging of Fathers (as some have taken offence at my using of reasons to confirm the doctrine, but with very little reason as I suppose), I must pray them to give me leave to use them, till I can see that unlawfulness which they affirm to be in the practice, and to censure me in charity for the use of them, as I do them for not using them. I will look as well to my heart in the use of them as God shall enable me; and when I shall see the harm of them, I will endeavour as much to avoid them. In the mean time, I will make as much use as I can of them, to edify the church of God."'—Page 65. Of course this is no answer at all, seeing that the objection was not to his own self-improvement, but to the bewildering of his ordinary hearers with his 'much learning.'

# SAMUEL TORSHELL.

IF Literature has its Beaumont and Fletcher, never to be named except together, equally has Theology its Dod and Cleaver, Palmer and Cawdrey, and Stock and Torshell. Having done our best to tell the story of the 'Life' of Richard Stock, it is only meet that we should do the same for his friend and associate Samuel Torshell. In proceeding to recount 'the short and simple annals' of this pre-eminently learned and devout man, we labour under the disadvantage of having had no predecessor whatever. For while Brook and many other Puritan books of history and biography, have found ample space for names far inferior, you look in vain for his in any one of them. Even in a very useful, though far from immaculate, compilation—'Nonconformity in Cheshire'*—the county which was the chief scene of his holy and devoted work—one is chagrined to find his name, in the few lines about him, transmogrified into 'Forshall' (recently a familiar and lamented one to Biblical scholars), and carefully entered as such in the index,—a blunder which has not the poor merit or demerit of originality, for it is copied from Bishop Gastrell's 'Notitia Cestriensis,' published by the Chetham Society, under an editorship that ought to have ensured accuracy.†

It is not known where or when SAMUEL TORSHELL was born. But from a pleasing incidental notice in his 'Hypocrite Discovered,' we learn that his father must have been a 'man of God,' of the ancient Puritan stamp. Thus genially does his son speak of him in enforcing 'family prayer' and 'mutual conference:—

'Here,' he says, 'I will take occasion to give his due honour to him who gave me life, that among many other graces that made him shine in his private condition, this was one, that he was conscionable of and most profitable in private conference. He and some select friends, judicious and godly private Christians, kept constantly one day in a fortnight, in course, at their several houses, to confer sometimes about wholesome cases of conscience, sometimes upon chosen heads of divinity, sometimes upon controverted points, according as they propounded the matter to be treated upon still at their next meeting, and then a supper together under a law of temperance, and a penalty if any should exceed in his provisions. This practice I observed in my father and his friends for many years, and I note, to commend it unto the imitation of others, as a notable means of their spiritual thriving. I am sure his profit by it was great. I find the fruits of it among his papers, where many questions are so judiciously, so fully, so clearly resolved, that they were worthy to be communicated.'‡

Happy father, who sends forth his 'children' with such home-memories! Happy children, so 'won' to their 'father's God!' Conversely how sad, when with recollections of home are mingled no fireside words about Jesus, no melody of psalms, no early-anchored faith in the Bible,

* 'Historical Sketches of Nonconformity in the County Palatine of Chester. By various Ministers and Laymen in the County. 1 Vol. 8vo. (Kent & Co). 1864, p. 145. The blunder is the less pardonable in that Torshell is incidentally but accurately named at page xviii.

† Vol. i. page 217. 'Notitia Cestriensis,' or Historica Notices of the Diocese of Chester, by Bishop Gastrell, now first printed; with explanatory notes by the Rev. F. R. Raines, 1846.

‡ Page 50.

no fragrance, as from spices, of prayer, no restraining and constraining example of the 'white robes' worn whitely even in earth's miry ways, no loving out-telling of 'the grand morality.'

Of his mother, all that has reached is that she was a 'midwife,' whether before or after marriage, or when a widow, doth not appear.* But a curious anecdote which occurs in John Bunyan's 'Life and Death of Mr Badman, presented to the world in a Familiar Dialogue between Mr Wiseman and Mr Attentive' (12mo, 1680), probably refers to her. In illustrating the evil fruits of Licentiousness, he enumerates 'Murder' among others, and confirms it by an extraordinary case that had come under his own observation. He then makes Wiseman say, 'This story the midwife's son, *who was a minister*, told me, and also protested that his mother told it him for a truth.'† In 1649, when Torshell died, Bunyan was upwards of twenty years old.

Our Worthy had at least one sister. For, turning over the treasures of the Williams' Library of London—which, to the praise of its present custodiers be it recorded, is ever, with large interpretation, open to the use of every really worthy inquirer—we chanced upon a daintily bound copy—rose in gold on either side, edges dimly golden—of his 'Three Questions of Free Justification, Christian Liberty, and the Use of the Law,' and on the end fly-leaf (upside down) found this inscription, 'Sarah Torshell, me jure possidet: ex dono fratris de dono fratris.'‡

Our first glimpse of SAMUEL TORSHELL § is at Cambridge, which, it needeth not to be told, was *the* University of 'The Puritans,' as the college chosen by him was *Puritanissimus Puritanorum.* He matriculated at Christ's College as a sizar 22d March 1620–1, proceeded B.A. 1624–5, and passed M.A. 1628.‖

Master Samuel was thus 'entered' into the College of the good Margaret Countess of Richmond and Derby, mother of the 7th Henry, the college in which was first of all performed the singular old comedy of 'Gammer Gurton's Needle;' and above all and beyond all, was not only the college of JOHN MILTON—whose mulberry, more fortunate than that of his at Stratford-on-Avon, still 'putteth forth leaves' in the Garden,—but he was proceeding B.A. when the 'Lady of the College' 'entered,' and M.A. when he was proceeding B.A.¶

Besides this one name, all other names eclipsing, and that of Sir Philip Sidney, 'Christ's' boasts of Latimer, and Heath, and Grindall; and later, and in fact contemporaneous with Torshell, John More, Hugh Broughton, Andrew Willet, Joseph Mede, Henry More, Chaderton, Clerke, Dillingham, Edward Dering, Arthur Hildersam, William Ames, and the Plato of English Theology, John Howe. Of poets belonging to 'Christ's' were Francis Quarles, Cleveland, Sir John Harrington, translator of Ariosto, and Gabriel Harvey, the friend of Spenser.** As Torshell in his writings refers affectionately to Sir John Harrington and George Herbert, it is probable that their friendship commenced at college.†† Of 'Christ's' altogether, Fuller, in his own quaint way, observes: 'It may without flattery be said of this House, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all," if we consider the many divines who in so short a time have here had their education.'‡‡ Torshell, on passing Master of Arts,

* Ric. Smyth's Obituary, 29: Peck's Desid. Curiosa, vol. ii. p. 53 (Edn. 1779 4o.)

† Works, by Offor, vol. iii. p. 612.

‡ I would here specially acknowledge the unfailing kindness of one of the trustees, the Rev. R. Brook Aspland of Hackney. At no little personal labour, he was ever ready to attend to my many (I fear) troublesome inquiries.

§ The spelling of his name, like that of Stock, is very arbitrary. Thus in the title-page of his 'Hypocrite Discovered,' it is given with two l's, while to the 'Epistle Dedicatory' it has only one. So also in his 'Three Questions.' His sister, as above, signed with two l's, and it is the more frequent.

‖ Again I am indebted for these dates to C. H. Cooper, Esq., of Cambridge.

¶ The following are the entries of Milton's admission and degrees in the College books: 'Johannes Milton, Londinensis, filius Johannis, institutus fuit in literarum elementis sub Magistro Hill gymnasii Paulini præfecto; admissus est pensionarius minor, Feb. 12. 1624, sub Mro Chappell, solvitque pro ingr. 0. 10s. 0d.' 'Jo. Milton, Coll. Chr. Art. Bac., 1628. Art. Mr. 1632.'

** Cf Fuller's 'History' and 'Memorials,' as before.

†† For Harrington, see 'Hypocrite Discovered,' p. 58, *et alibi*, at pp. 80, 141; he also quotes other MSS. For Herbert very frequently.

‡‡ 'History,' as before.

proceeded to London, and there was immediately engaged in 'preaching;' in what church has not been discovered. But his London 'ministry' at this period must have been very brief, for he was in 1629 'presented' to the 'perpetual curacy' of Bunbury in Cheshire. His predecessor, the wise and Christ-like William Hinde,—the friend of Rainolds and Airay, and whose 'Remembrance of the Holy Life and Happy Death of John Bruen, of Bruen-Stopford, in the county of Chester, Esquire,' remains without a peer in its fine glimpses of the interiors of ancient and rural Puritan life, and for its gentle charities—died in June 1629; and in the 'Notitia Cestriensis' of Bishop Gastrell, already alluded to,—though the name is misspelled, or rather misprinted by the editor, there is no doubt of who is intended,—he is entered 'anno 1629' as Vicarius de Bunbury.'* He thus immediately succeeded Hinde. He received the appointment from the 'Master and Wardens of the Haberdashers' Company of London,' to whom, in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' of his 'Three Questions,' he makes grateful acknowledgments. One short passage gathers up these *data*, and therefore we give it here:—''Tis not custom,' he says, 'but a right, that challenges the Dedication. They are Sermons which were preached in the *interim*, while I was yours, though at London, and to that people whom I still equally both love and honour, and who at that time owned my preachings. Yet, after your choice had separated me from them to a remoter country and greater task, their desire first called it to the press.'†

Bunbury, to which Samuel Torshell was thus 'introduced,' and with which he must ever be chiefly associated, is distant about 3½ miles S.S.E. from Tarporley, on the Chester and Crewe railroad. It is a parish and township in the hundred of Eddisbury, which again lies within Delamere. Formerly it was the seat of a Collegiate Church, founded by Sir Henry Calveley in 1388, consisting of a master, submaster, five chaplains, two chanters, and two choristers. It was dissolved *temp.* Edward VI. by statute, and annexed to the Crown. The tithes were leased and ultimately purchased by Thomas Aldersey—an honoured name in the Palatine county. He was an 'haberdasher and citizen,' and he it was who gave the revenue of the living to the Haberdashers' Company. Besides this, he built a schoolhouse at Bunbury, which, in 1705, is styled 'a large and stately building.' Edward Burghall, the 'ejected' minister of Acton, near Nantwich, was master of this school for some time.‡

Bishop Gastrell designates Torshell 'Vicarius,' but this is a mistake. Bunbury was and is a 'perpetual curacy,' held, as we have already seen, by the 'Haberdashers' Company.' By patent from Queen Elizabeth, the Company present to the curacy, and have power to displace the curate for immorality or unnecessary absence. But the curate is licensed by the bishop, and subject to his jurisdiction. The church is dedicated to St Boniface; value recently £117. The registers of burials and marriages begin in 1559, and baptisms in 1598.§

Torshell must have been young when he was 'presented' to this 'Curacy,' for in the little book above quoted he apologises for not entering upon the discussion of certain deeper questions thus:—'It were a presumption to endeavour a reconcilement, *unfit for my few years.*'‖ He

* As before. † Pages 1, 2.

‡ County Histories: Fuller's 'Worthies:' Memoranda sent me by Rev. R. B. Aspland of Hackney. See also Brook under Burghall.

§ As in ‡. It may be noted here that Hinde was preceded by the saintly Christopher Harvey, to whom Torshell pays loving tribute in his Funeral Sermon for Moulson, page 248. Bunbury had thus from the Reformation to the Commonwealth, Harvey, Hinde, and Torshell,—a remarkable succession. The first, Harvy or Harvey (the orthography varying), supplies a long missing bit of information, viz., the name and *locale* of the father of *the* Christopher Harvey who wrote the well-known 'Synagogue,' appended to George Herbert's 'Temple.' Anthony a-Wood mentions that he was the 'son of a minister in Cheshire,' but neither he nor his editor (Dr Bliss), nor the various editors of Herbert (*e.g.* the beautiful edition of Pickering, 2 vols. 8vo, 1853, and the smaller 'Aldine'), knew his name. He is now found to have been worthy son of worthy sire. Cf. Works of Herbert, as above, vol. ii. pp. 289–292, and Wood, by Bliss, III. 538, 539.

‖ Page 2. Later also in his 'Hypocrite Discovered' (p. 11) he says, 'More than I can take notice of. I want the benefit of long experience and great practice, having lived most out of the crowd.'

must also have been a son of Cheshire by adoption and residence, prior to his settlement as pastor at Bunbury, inasmuch as in his dedication of his 'Christian Fellowship' he thus speaks:—'I resolved,' he says, 'to leave a public testimony in your hand how dear my Bunburie (ah! desolated Bunbury, often warned), how dear your Cheshire (mine too I may call it in some respects, as having spent a full third part of my life in it.')* This is under date 1644. That 'Bunbury' was '*dear*' to him in the deepest sense of the word is beyond all question, and it is unspeakably beautiful to find one so scholarly cherishing in his heart of hearts the lowly parishioners of this sequestered sphere. Mark how the words pulsate as, drawing upon Bunbury experiences, he thus sketches the humble rustic 'believer':—

'There lies,' he says, 'a great deal of wealth in some obscure and neglected Christians. They do not more ordinarily tread upon and walk over the unknown veins of gold in America, than many supercilious and conceited professors do pass by and neglect golden and very precious spirits. One would not think what dexterity in the Scriptures, what judgment in controversies, what ability to settle and comfort a disturbed conscience, what fervency and expressions in prayer, what acquaintance with God and his providence, what strength of faith, what patience, meekness, moderation, contentedness, heavenly-mindedness, and what not, may be now and then found out and discovered in plain people, men and women that wear plain clothes, that have plain carriage and plain speech. And besides there may haply be more where grace is expected than we look for; more in a saint than a bare sentence or action will or can express. The golden vein is broader and thicker than sometimes we guess it to be. How then is the necessary use of wisdom to be able to see further than the russet? Not to be cozened with reverend beards, and grave furs, and demure countenances (like the councillors to the Muscovian that I spake of in my "Hypocrite,") as if graces and gifts dwelt only at those signs. And when we find a vein, there must be skill to dig it. Oh! how did the old patriarchs remove their habitations for the benefit of water-springs! how did they rejoice when they found a well! And we, when we have met with these "wells of living water," how shall we fetch it up!' (Proverbs xx. 5).†

The touching references to '*desolated* Bunbury' remind us that Torshell was resident there during what is emphatically known as 'the Troubles.' Presented to the curacy in 1629, his name appears in the title-page of 'The Saint's Humiliation' as minister of God's Word at Bunbury in 1633. Shortly before and shortly after the latter date, the royalist troops 'played havoc' in this 'nest of the Puritans,' as Cheshire was regarded. All through the Civil Wars it suffered. At Tarvin, not far from Bunbury, there was a parliamentary garrison seated, and it was often attacked. The 'Diary' of the Puritan 'minister' of Nantwich, good Edward Burghall, contains many incidental references to Bunbury and the neighbourhood. Indeed, all through the Civil War, the palatine-county played an important part, especially after the Royalist violation of the 'treaty' made at Bunbury, 23d December 1642.

The prevailing feeling was decidedly in favour of the Parliament, and the 'Royalists' were in a small and hopeless minority. Being of local influence, however,—noblemen and gentlemen,—they sought to coerce their tenants, and to muster a regiment for the king. In a pungent contemporary Tractate, we have passionate expressions of the bearing of this truculent and cruel 'minority.' It is headed the 'Unfaithfulness of the Cavaliers,' and as our Worthy is incidentally named in one passage, it may be given as a specimen of the whole. 'Colonel Hastings,' it proceeds, 'sent his troops to Mr Lancaster's house, the pastor of Tarporley, a painful (=painstaking) and pious preacher. Thither the Lord Cholmley, who is Mr Lancaster's parishioner, sent many of his and Lord Rivers' horse, that fed upon his hay and corn, and carried Mr Lancaster's hay and barley in the sheaves, and littered their horses into the barley, though there was plenty of oat-straw in the barn close by. Lord Cholmley said that Mr Lancaster lost too little if he lost all, and called him a stinking rascal, with other such opprobrious speeches. . . . . In the same town they have plundered the hay, fuel, and all the household goods of Mr Ley, to the veriest

* Page 3. † *Ibid.* pp. 24, 25.

bed cords; and at Utkington they have beaten the servants, and taken rich apparel and furniture to the value of £200 and more. They have plundered Stapleford, Mr Bruen's house, and Mr Judson in Rushton, of all that he had, which they rate at £100, and William Welde of the same town, to the value of about £15; *Mr Torshell's house also, the pastor of Bunburie.* In a word, there is not an household in all these parts reputed religious, but less or more they have pillaged them.'*

In the 'Epistle Dedicatory,' of his 'Hypocrite Discovered,' there is allusion to this 'pillage' of his goods. 'I had not,' he says, 'put my last hand unto it, but some of my books being rifled, and others, even all, kept from me through the injury of the times, and the calamity of those parts, I have presented it to you as it is.'†

We have in his 'Case of Conscience' another glimpse of the guises and disguises demanded by Christ's honoured servants during this stormy and distressing period. Having told a capital anecdote of the good John Brentius's flight after getting the famous note, 'Fuge, fuge Brenti, cito, citius, citissime,' under the garb of a captain, with buff, and a patch upon one eye, Torshell adds, 'he is excused by the grave writer of his story; which I also allege in defence of those scarlet cloaks, buff-coats, gray rockets, perukes of hair, and coloured monteros which have of late hid many grave and sober ministers from the eyes of their adversaries.'‡

Besides these and very many kindred 'spoliations' and perils, the 'Diary' of saintly Philip Henry, and the trumpet-words of Dr William Spurstowe,—a native of Bunbury, and the friend of Hampden, Milton, and Baxter,—might furnish alternately pathetic and defiant confirmations, beyond the 'Cheshire Rising,' unto the grand close. Such were the 'trials' through which Liberty agonised to its final and glorious triumph. Nor must we forget in our indignation with the Cholmleys and Riverses, that in their hour of success the anti-Royalists were guilty of not unsimilar wrongs. If we here give the necessary details of the former, it is only because they enter into the 'Life' being recorded; in the 'Life' of a Royalist, as of Farindon or Fuller, the others should have like memorial and like reprobation.

Besides the pastoral ties that endeared Bunbury to Torshell, there were pathetic family associations. The 'graves' of his 'household' were there. The 'Registers' of the Church reveal what is nowhere else stated, that our Worthy was married, and had the home shadows, and the home sunlight. These entries speak for themselves:—

'Christenings.'

1633. 9 7r [September]. Ric. fil: Sam: Torshell.
1636. 1 May. Sam: Torshell fil: Sam. T.
1637. 31 Or [October]. Jo: son of Sam. Torshell.

'Burials.'

1639. 23 Jan. Eliz. Torshell.
1661. 3 Nr [November]. W. Torshell.

Who his wife was we have failed to trace; and equally whether it was she who was buried on '23d January 1639;' nor have we been able to find out the after-history of the 'christened' children.§

* Quoted in 'Nonconformity in Cheshire,' as before, p. xviii. 'The people of Bunbury, especially the oldest, point out a traditionary oak, where the inhabitants came and hid their provisions in the hollow part during these unquiet times. Part of the stock of the oak still remains, and it has evidently been of enormous size.' Rev. William Lowe, Bunbury, to me.

† Page 8. ‡ Page 12.

§ I have to thank the present Vicar of Bunbury (Rev. William Lowe) for these details. He has also furnished the following interesting *memorabilia* from the Registers:—

Burials, 1601, 18 March: Jo: Tomkys, minister of Bunb.
,, 1601, 23 N [November], Xtopher Harvy, preachr. of Bunb.
,, 1603, 4 Mar. Hannah Hynd, fil. W., preacher of Bunbury.
,, 1629, June 21, Wm. Hynde, departed this life: he was preacher of God's word at Bunbury for almost 28 years.

Under date '1646: Jan. 15' is this curious entry:—'These two children were the first that were baptised according to the Parliament Directory at Bunbury, I being threatened by

Whither Torshell went when the 'troubles' came upon Bunbury, it is impossible to say definitely, but in all probability it was to London. In his 'Epistle Dedicatory' of 'Christian Fellowship,' to a renowned Cheshire gentlewoman of old Puritan descent and worth, 'the Right Worshipfull Mrs Jane Done of Utkinton,' he informs her: 'This which I have digested into the form of a small treatise, was the substance of two sermons which I preached, both at Istleworth and at Christ Church, London;' and then towards the close, after a well-deserved tribute to the excellent lady's loyalty to Puritanism and the Parliament, he continues: 'I have another reason why I inscribe this to you, namely, to leave a testimony of the sincere and great respect I bear, and have ever borne to you, since I had the happiness to have acquaintance with your gifts and graces. That storm which hath forced you from your habitation, *having driven me also to seek refuge in those more safe coverts.*' Then he adds affectingly, 'I know not how it may please God to dispose of me, or where my poor service may be employed. Wheresoever . . . . I sit down (if a sitting down may be expected in so great a commotion and hurl of things), I resolved to leave a public testimony in your hand.' * † This was in 1644. It would seem that he had first of all retired to 'Istleworth,' and ultimately to London. 'Christ's Church,' London, was from 1642 up to the 'Ejection' of 1662, held by William Jenkyn,—whose 'Commentary' on 'Jude' makes his name a familiar and prized one 'unto this day,"—and as *he* was a friend of Torshell, to whose 'Hypocrite Discovered' he prefixed certain 'Latin verses,' we may find herein an explanation of his 'preaching' there.

That Torshell did not 'flee' from Bunbury without well weighing the occasion, is proved by a tractate which he issued in 1643, and which seems to have escaped all bibliographers hitherto. It is entitled, 'A Case of Conscience concerning Flying in Times of Trouble.' It is a singularly curious and, biographically, exceedingly gratifying production. It 'opens a window' into the very soul of the author, and also proves, if proof were needed, how sensitively the Puritans made all their procedure matter of conscience. It throbs with patriotic emotion. It is blurred as with tears, in personal allusions. It was written, says the beginning of the epistle 'to the Reader,' 'about four months since, upon an occasion that offered itself.' This tallies with the 'spoliation' of Cholmley and Rivers, and hence it looks as if he had remained still in Bunbury, coming and going, up to 1642–43. No doubt a 'John Swanne' appears as 'minister' at Bunbury even so early as 1616; but he is elsewhere called a 'stipendiary,'‡ and Torshell, no doubt, retained the 'Curacy,' though flitting hither and thither, in the 'hurl' of the times, as already illustrated. From the fact that he is called 'Preacher at Cripplegate,' in the record of his death, we learn that in the interregnum, after the 'sequestration' of Dr William Fuller (father-in-law of Brian Walton), in 1642, Torshell filled this celebrated pulpit—the pulpit of Bishop Lancelot

Captain Hulse of Beeston Castle, the Sabbath before, for baptising according to the communion book '[the next word is illegible, looks like 'plesewur'] [in] 'presence of the congregation; he said [it] was superstitiously.' John Swanne was the 'minister' (?) at this time. He came in 1616, and had consequently officiated during the whole time of Samuel Torshell's preachership, as well as part of Hinde's. See foot-note on this page ‡. It is difficult to decide whether Torshell was 'preacher' or the 'minister' *proper*. His title-pages shew both titles; but Aldersey's calling Swanne a mere 'stipendiary,' and Gastrell naming Torshell 'Vicarius,' inclines us to think he must have been the 'perpetual curate' or Vicar.

* Epistle Dedicatory pp. 2, 3.

† For notices of the Done family, see Mr Raines' note on Gastrell, N. C. i. 141. A sister of Jane, viz. Mary, became the wife of John Crewe, Esq., second son of Sir John Crewe, the friend of Dr Sibbes. Of the virtues of a certain lady-member of the family, tradition still preserves many stories, so that, according to Pennant, 'when a Cheshire man would express excellence in the fair sex,' he will say, 'There is a Lady Done for you' (pp. 79, 80).

‡ The Bunbury parish registers contain accounts of some ludicrous squabbles between this 'John Swanne' and the lessees of the rectory. With reference to one claim, Mr Aldersey has this concise and keen note: 'Mr Swanne is mistaken, He is neither preceptor, vicar, nor curate, but a stipendiary; all he can claim is his £20' Non. Chest. p. 145. From a note which the present Vicar of Bunbury (Rev. William Lowe) has kindly addressed to me, it would appear that there have always been two beneficed clergymen connected with the living of Bunbury, viz., the Vicar or Curate and the Preacher, an arrangement which subsists to this day. Torshell was the 'Curate' or 'Vicar,' as distinguished from the 'Preacher' probably.

Andrewes. That he very soon attained no common position is shewn by two things. First of all, on '12th May 1646,' he preached before the 'House of Commons,' being 'the day of their solemn thanksgiving for regaining and taking' many 'garrisons,' which are all enumerated in the title page of the printed sermon—'The Palace of Justice.' Then earlier he was, by an 'ordinance of Parliament, on March 19. 1643–1644,' appointed to be household chaplain at St James's to two of the children of Charles I., then under the care of Parliament, viz. Henry Duke of Gloucester and Elizabeth the Princess. The salary or stipend was fixed at £200, a very considerable sum at that time. Full details of the duties of the onerous office which Torshell was thus called upon to fill, and also of those discharged by Marshall and Sedgwick, Spurstowe and Caryl, and Jeremiah Whittaker, are given by Vicars.* The most interesting glimpse, however, is afforded us by an incidental statement in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to his 'Design about disposing the Bible into an Harmony' (1647). 'This that I now humbly offer to your hands, hath been long in my thoughts; *but much more since, in my attendance on his Majesty's children, I have* (under the encouragement and particular favours of the Right Honourable my Lord the Earl of Northumberland, to whose care you have entrusted those royal pledges) read through the Bible in an expository way.' It need hardly be observed that, through 'good report and bad report,' SAMUEL TORSHELL was true 'to the Parliament,' and never forgot his country for his king. Nevertheless, a careful reader of his books comes ever and anon upon wistful turns of expression, that shew how his heart, in common with all the genuine Puritans, was wrung in the stern adhesion to his patriotic convictions, whereby he could not but assert the superior claims of the Nation to one who need not be characterised in this 19th century.

How brave, yet how soft, how courteous even in their curtness, are these words from his 'Case of Conscience:—'We may not,' says he, 'now suffer the thoughts of safety elsewhere to womanise our spirits; but, together with our earnest and humble prayers for our king, that he may at length embrace the counsels of our great Estate: we are in care of so sad a necessity, to resolve to lay out all our strength towards the great business, and rather burn our ships, as some stories mention of some resolute soldiers, to keep off all thoughts of return to the cowardly and faint-hearted; that is, forget all conveniences and opportunities of being elsewhere in a whole skin.'† Sorrowfully, yet manfully and patriotically, he took his stand with those who were 'God's Sword,' to achieve terrible vengeance for the treason of the Throne to 'the kingdom.'

With no less touching reluctance did Torshell find himself opposed to 'the Church,' into which he had been born, and at whose altar he 'served.' He thus addressed the 'Assembly of Divines' at Westminster, in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' of the 'Hypocrite Discovered;' and we submit the passage, not controversially or as partizans, but as really forming a vital part of the man's history and 'Life.' Nor will the impartial Churchman be so uncandid as object or look for suppression of what, right or wrong, was the very substance and make of Torshell's belief, any more than does the Nonconformist expect the Biographers and Editors of the Parker, Anglo-Catholic, and other Church Serieses, to suppress anti-Puritan facts and opinions. It is an unworthy jealousy that on either side cannot hear the actual *data*, for or against, in a given 'Life.

'I have ventured forth a tender piece, which is not likely to escape the censure of such as are guilty, whom perhaps it may make to smart; and therefore it will need the patronage of such as are very discerning and very sincere. *Such I esteem you*, and from my very soul do bless God for you, and have hopes that God hath it in his thoughts to refresh this poor and torn nation and the churches, because he hath given

* Vicars's 'English Parliamentary Chronicle,' 4to, 1646. Cf. also Mrs M. A. Green's 'Lives of the Princesses,' vi. 344. Princess Elizabeth died Sept. 8. 1650, at Carisbrook. Cf. Lord's Journals, vi. 475.

† Page 9.

courage to so many able and godly divines to meet together, though threatened with proclamations to the contrary; and being met, a sweet agreement in common principles and the love of the truth, though prophesied of by ungodly, wanton, and profane wits, that they would presently break asunder through variety of opinions. *Truly if you had brought with you that pride and pomp which we were wont to see in our former mock synods and convocations, we might have expected that before this time you should have been the derision and scorn of the prelatical and atheistical party.* But for ever blessed be the name of God for that sweet condescension, for that humble and resolved subjection unto light, for that diligent and holy pursuit of truth, which altogether do promise an happy issue of your meeting. Go on with your prudent and holy debates, and the Lord so bless them and crown them, that your advice being laid before our great and high Court, they may, under God, settle upon us the glory of all the ordinances of Christ, and remove every burden which the tyranny of abused Episcopacy had laid upon us. I call their courses tyranny, and their impositions burdens, as having had, through the happiness of these late times, better means and opportunity to discern and weigh them; for let me speak freely, and as becomes us, now that the hand of God is so much out against the nation; let me speak humbly. I confess my thoughts were heretofore more favourable, as walking according to those principles I had received in my education. The truth is, though I never thought Episcopacy to be of divine right, as it was proudly challenged, yet I looked upon it as the most ancient and most prudential way of government, and so obeyed it, and spake well of it, though not its mad and furious ways; for I ever protested against their altars and their *cringes*, their suppressing of faithful and painful preachers, their discouraging and undermining of the power of godliness, their wanton and profane abuse of the high and dreadful censure of excommunication; yet in a general conformity to such things as I conceived were by law established, I obeyed it, as thinking it to be a sin not to have done so. I will not be ashamed to put those charitable thoughts I had (for so I will call them, and so my own conscience, after I examined it, doth call them) among the *errata* of my life. The reading of Cyprian first made me stumble in the point of Episcopacy; but afterwards, when I met with Mr White's learned and serious speech against it in parliament, which was afterwards printed, to the great good, I believe, of the kingdom, as no doubt inviting many to look into that point, which they had not formerly studied, I was fully convinced of the inconveniences and mischiefs of it among us.'*

It was in the very crisis of hazard, as taking his life 'in his hand,' Samuel Torshell so spoke. Nor is this all. In the book itself, with sarcasm unusual to him, he thus, with all Fuller's archness of wit, addresses the time-servers:—

'Such snails as these,' says he, 'come abroad in the dew, but afterwards creep in again. If they perceive the air to thicken, and the clouds to grow black for rain, they house themselves, and get back again, though their feet were over the threshold, and they had begun their journey. They love not dirty ways nor stormy weather; they are with the forwardest when the garments and the palm-branches are spread, and the people cry, Hosanna! to triumphant Christ; but they shrink away when He is led to Calvary. If once the swords and staves appear, they will rather leave their linen garments and run away naked, than be taken with Him' (Mark xiv. 51, 52).†

With what cutting severity, mingled with prudence, does he further 'reprove' somewhat onward:—

'Their zeal is much like this (Pharisaic), who are earnest in the pulpit against the sins of—the *absent;* who in plain country congregations cry out against the pride of the times, and in the obscure churches of country villages inveigh against the misgovernments and errors of the State.' ''Tis fit that these things,' he nobly adds, 'be spoken against, when a people are to be undeceived; but it must be in the king's Court, especially in the king's chapel. But if Amaziah the court chaplain make the chapel a sanctuary (as the Hebrew also signifies, Amos vii. 12, 13), and suffer not plain-dealing, truth-telling Amos to preach there, yet why should he send him to flee into other places and preach there? In other places a prophet may mourn for and lament the sins of the magistrate unto God; but it would be no true-born zeal to fill the people with his declamations, unless, as I said, it be needful to undeceive the people.'‡

Very rare is this combination of the *fortiter* with the *suaviter;* but herein Torshell only exemplified his own rule: 'All are not fitted for a rough handling. In our reproofs, we must endeavour both to be plain and pleasing; by the former we shall shew ourselves honest, by the latter discreet.'§ Finally, for we must limit ourselves, in the same outspoken and intrepid but

* Pages 1–3. † H. D. p. 41. ‡ H. D. p. 72. § 'Three Questions,' pp. 100, 101.

dignifiedly respectful way does he speak in the 'Epistle' to the 'Case of Conscience.' Referring to the need for his tractate, he says,

'The condition of the times doth challenge it, wherein many seem to be ashamed of their former acquaintance with the great cause in hand. The truth is, many that came up to the Parliament-sense in the head of the tide, are willing to shrink away in the ebb of things. There is a poor, and low, and narrow spirit in very many, who thought well of the Parliament only so long as nobody spake ill of it, or durst speak out, if they thought otherwise, and loved it while they might be safe and enjoy the world's friendship. God will not honour himself to such self-seekers. We must bid a better price before God will part with the rich commodity of Reformation. If we love the public cause, we must not only keep it company in its health, but stand by it and comfort it in its faintings. And this is the purpose of the following discourse, which I commend unto the blessing of the Almighty.'

We could not more fitly close this first Memoir of a gifted and godly man than with these Cromwell-like words. He died on 23d March 1649. Not knowing the date of his birth, we cannot tell his age; but if he went to Cambridge at the same age—which was a common one—with his friend Stock, he must have been under fifty years. Like Sibbes with the 'Soul's Conflict,' he seems to have put the finishing touches to a new edition of one of his books ('The Woman's Glory'), and then quietly 'died.'

Being so fortunate as to have a complete set of Torshell's writings, we have the pleasure of giving here, for the first time, a full and accurate catalogue of them arranged chronologically:—

I. The three Questions of Free Iustification, Christian Liberty, The use of the Law. Explicated in a briefe Comment on St Pavl to the Galatians, from the 16. vers. of the second Chapter, to the 26. of the third. By Sam. Torshell, Pastor of Bunbury in Cheshire. London: Printed by I. B for H. Overton, and are to be sold at his shop in Popes-head-Alley, at the entring into Lumbard-street. 1632. 12mo.

II. The Saints Hvmiliation. Being the Substance of nine profitable Sermons upon severall Texts. viz.

1. The nature of a Fast; on Judges 20. 26.
2. The Christians Watchfulnesse; on Mark 13. 37.
3. God's Controversie for sinne; on Hosea 4. 12.
4. The Remedy of Distresse; on Gen. 32. 9, 11.
5. The use of the Covenant & Promises; on Gen. 32. 10.
6. The Broken Sacrifice; on Psalme 51. 17.
7. Good wishes for Sion; on Psalme 51. 17.
8. Motives to Repentance; } on Math. 3. 7, 8.
9. An exhortation to Repentance; }

First Preached and applied by Samvel Torshel, Minister of God's Word at Bunbury, and now published for the common good. London, Printed by Iohn Dawson for Henry Overton, and are to be sold at his Shop at the entering into Popes-head-alley out of Lumbard-streete. 1633. 4to. *** Prefixed is an Epistle Dedicatory to Nicholas Raynton, Lord Major (*sic*) of London, Master of the Societie of Haberdashers, by A. B, probably Anthony Burgess, and an 'Epistle to the Reader' by the admirable Richard Maden. It may be noted that the pagination is interrupted at p. 116 and is resumed from 1 on to p. 69.

III. A Learned and Very useful Commentary vpon the Whole Prophesie of Malachy. By That late Reverend, Godly and Learned Divine, Mr. Richard Stock, sometime Rector of Allhallowes Breadstreet, London, and now, according to the Originall Copy left by him, published for the common good. Whereunto is added, an Exercitation vpon the Same Prophesie of Malachy. By Samuel Torshell, London, Printed by T. H. and R. H. for Thomas Nichols and are to be sold at the Bible in Popes head alley. 1641.

IV. A Case of conscience concerning Flying in Times of Trouble. Resolved according to the Scriptures, and the Examples of Holy men. Applyed to the present times and occasions. This Treatise I judge very necessary for these times, and therefore very fit to be Printed. Edm. Calamy. London, Printed for John Bellamie and Ralph Smith, and are to be sold at their shop, at the three Golden Lyons in Cornhill, neare the Royall Exchange. 1643. 4to. 'To the Reader' signed S. T.

V. A Helpe to Christian Fellowship: or a Discourse tending to the advancement and spiritual improvement of holy Societie. Wherein the practise of it is commended. 1. In the communicating or imparting of these gifts and graces. 2. In their walking together in the ordinances of Christ. 3. In a mutuall serviceablenesse to one another. The particular Graces necessary to the qualifying of Christians for it are propounded. And an Invitation unto it is urged by some motives from the benefit and pleasantnesse thereof. Applied to these times for the strengthening of mens hands in the happy work of Reformation. By Samuel Torshell. Imprimatur, Charles Herle. London, Printed by G. M. for John Bellamy, at the Signe of the three golden Lyons neare the Royall Exchange. 1644. 4to.

VI. The Hypocrite Discovered and Cvred.

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| The Definition<br>The Kindes<br>The Subject<br>The Symptoms | of Hypocrisie. | The Prognosticks<br>The Causes<br>The Cure | of Hypocrisie. |

a Discovrse Fvrnished with much variety of Experimentall and Historicall observations, and most seasonable for these times of happy designe for Reformation. In two Bookes. By Samuell Torshell. With an Epistle to the Assembly of Divines, about the discerning of spirits. Ordered, Novemb 24. 1643. that this Booke be printed, for Iohn Bellamie. Iohn White. Imprimatur, Edm. Calamie. London, Printed by G. M. for John Bellamy at the signe of the three golden Lyons near the Royall Exchange. M.DC.XLIV.

*** It may be mentioned that the Williams Library copy of the "Hypocrite Discovered" contains on fly-leaf the rare autograph of "Francis Bampfylde," and throughout his careful and intensely appreciative markings.

VII. The Palace of Justice opened and set to veiw (*sic*), in a Sermon at Margarets Westminster before the Honorable House of Commons Assembled in Parliament, upon the 12th of May, 1646. Being the day of their Solemn Thanksgiving, for Regaining and taking in the severall Garrisons, of

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| The City of Exeter. | Dunster Castle. |
| Barnstable. | Titbury Castle. |
| Michaels Mount in Cornwall. | Woodstock Mannor. |
| Ruthen Castle. | Castle of Bridgnorth. |
| Ilford-Combe. | Banbury Castle. |
| Aberystwyth in Wales. | Newark. |

By Sam. Torshel. London, Printed by T. R. and E. M. for John Bellamy at the three golden Lions in Cornhill. 1646. 4to.

VIII. The Woman's Glorie: A Treatise, First Asserting the due Honour of that Sexe. By manifesting that Women are capable of the highest improvements; And instancing severall Examples of Women's Eminencies in

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| 1. Wisdom. | 6. Constancy. |
| 2. Policie. | 7. Courage. |
| 3. Deliberation. | 8. Ability to govern. |
| 4. Secresie. | 9. Piety and Religion. |
| 5. Learning. | |

Secondly,

Directing wherein that Honour chiefly consists (viz.) in

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| 1. Soul glorie or inward beauty. | |
| 2. Modesty in Carriage, language and attire. | |
| 3. Humility. | 5. Silence. |
| 4. Wisdome. | 6. Piety and Devotion. |

The Second Edition inlarged. By Samuel Torshell. Printed for John Bellamy, at the three golden Lyons neare the Royall Exchange. 1650. 12mo.

*** From the 'Epistle to the Reader' it appears that the 1st edition was published in 1646; *e.g.* 'About four years since upon a particular occasion I wrote this following Treatise.' The 'enlarging' consists of an account of the Queen of Sweden.

IX. A Designe About Disposing the Bible into an Harmony. Or an Essay concerning the transposing the order of Books and Chapters of the holy Scriptures for the reducing of all into a continued History. The Benefits, Difficulties, Helpes. By Samuel Torshel. London, Printed by A. Miller, for John Bellamy at the three Golden Lyons near the Royall Exchange. M.D CXLVII. 4to.

X. God's Esteem of the Death of His Saints, Preached at the Funeral of Mr John Moulson, of Hargrave, at Bunbury in Cheshire. By S. T. in 'ΘΡΗΝΟΙΚΟΣ: The House of Mourning Furnished: with Directions for, Preparations to, Meditations of, Consolations at, the Hour of Death. Delivered in LVI Sermons, Preached at the Funerals of diverse faithful Servants of Christ.', Folio 3d edn. 1672. Sermon No. xx, pp. 243–250. Text Psalm cxvi. 15.

*** At page 92 of the 'Hypocrite Discovered,' there is a half-promise of another book, which, however, never appeared, probably for the reason indicated, seeing there were various able works published on the same subject. 'I could fit,' he says, 'this story with some others; but I have it in design to undertake the *atheist* in a particular Treatise, which promise I have once before intimated, (Ex. on Malachi, p. 66, folio) and will perform if God give opportunity and quiet time, the encouragement of study, and that I be not prevented (= anticipated) by some abler pen, which I rather desire as being a piece of work, which though I have hung upon the warp-wall, I despair almost of putting it into the loom, as knowing my own want of skill to weave as fine and curious a piece."

The slightest of the Works of Samuel Torshell carry with them, as their very warp and woof, evidences of extraordinary learning. Witness in his 'Exercitation' on Malachi now reprinted, and the historical 'Preface' to Stock, such a roll of authorities as makes your shallow theologue of these days stand aghast. Nor is the intimation without a flavour of humour, in the former that he was 'an hundred miles from any public library, having the use of no books but mine own.' His learning is very wide and various. We have of course the familiar Fathers and Classics, Augustine and Ambrose, Chrysostom and Bernard, Tertullian and Cyprian, Gregory and Athanasius, Homer and Cicero, Virgil and Ovid, Horace and Juvenal. But besides these there are choice bits, as of dust-of-gold, from Aquinas, and Avicena, and from The Schoolmen generally, and Luther, and Calvin, and 'Mr Knox,' besides such out-of-the-way names as Whimphelingius, Vitoduranus, Guadoguoli, Busbequius, Jacob D'Ausoles a Lapeyre, Roa, and scores of others, to which those of Milton's 'Sonnet' are as music. Looking a little nearer, you come upon Thomas à Kempis and Dante, 'my Lord Verulam' and Petrarch, and now and again there are touches that remind us of the giants with whom

he was either contemporary or little short of it. There are 'Mr Calvin' and 'Mr Knox,' 'Mr Herbert' and 'Mr Fuller,' and 'Mr Thomas Hooker,' and 'my Lord Brooke,' and Galileo (Galileus) is that 'curious and excellent man.' But while scarcely a page or margin is without the impress of inexhaustible resources of learning under thorough command,—proving that Dr Thomas Goodwin used '*learned*' in his loving 'testimony' in the fulness of its meaning,*—he makes his learning serve him, not he it. If there is the over-weight, there is also the strength and the lustre of the coat-of-mail in his abundantly 'confirmed' arguments. And at times, as the old poet sings, he puts off the 'helm of horror,' and with gushes of human feeling stoops to his lowliest readers as his own 'dear children.' 'They are bad preachers,' he tells us, 'that paint themselves in their own colours, instead of Christ. While in our ordinary sermons we do unnecessarily tell you how many Fathers we had read, how much we are acquainted with the Schoolmen, what critical Linguists we are or the like: 'tis a wretched ostentation. We do overmuch affect our own picture, and paint unto you our own scholarship.' Then he discriminatingly adds: 'It is not fit that divinity should be sordidly attended, but with such words as may both take the sense and the understanding. Yet there is most wisdom and efficacy in God's oratory, the sacred Scripture-expression; and we preach with most authority when we deny ourselves. I speak not as affecting a sluttish handling, but a Sermon well dressed with fit words rather than fine, but especially in the evidence of the Spirit and with power.'†

His 'Hypocrite Discovered' and 'Woman's Glorie' are packed full with recondite lore and anecdote, and personal allusions, after the type of Giles Firmin's 'Real Christian' (an extraordinary book) and the 'Thoughts' of Fuller. They have the same *pat* accommodations of passing events, reveal the same penetrating and shrewd observations, unmask pretence with the same unembittered insight, surprise in the same sudden manner, with tender words now of deep experience and now of expostulation, and especially equal, and indeed surpass, both Firmin and Fuller, in their tracking the windings and turnings of the deceitful human heart. Yet is it ever a light, not a fire that is applied.

We have occasionally interesting personal reminiscences of honoured names and books now renowned. Thus incidentally we come upon a little contribution to *Baconiana.* Having occasion to quote Daniel xii. 4, 'Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,' he interprets 'namely, by reading thy book when the time of fulfilling comes,' and continues: 'There is a *Manuscript* that offers a pleasant interpretation of these words, that the opening of the world by trade and navigation, and the increase of knowledge, should meet in one age.' Then he observes, 'The Lord Verulam embraced this sense, if himself invented the Frontispiece to his *Instauratio magna,* where, in a quiet sea, a ship is pictured with full spread sails, and under it this same sentence out of Daniel, "*Multi pertransibunt et augebitur scientia.*"'‡ It is pleasant to think of the '*Instauratio*' at once finding its way to the quiet parsonage of Bunbury.

Again we have a passing glimpse of the 'heavenly' Richard Sibbes. 'I have sometimes been thinking,' he remarks, 'that this may be a reason why many retired, godly, grave ministers cry not out so much in their pulpits against such and such foul sins, but by hearsay, they know them not. I remember I once heard that inward liver, that spiritual divine, Dr Sibbs, speak somewhat to this purpose in conference.'§

The 'Philological Society' also would do well to secure a 'Reader' of Torshell for their long-promised Dictionary. There are many singularly ingenious etymologies and the use of Baconian and Shakespearian words that furnish admirable illustrations. Of the former take two as

* Prefixed to 'Hypocrite Discovered.'
† 'Three Questions,' pp 1 5, 1 6.
‡ 'A Designe,' p. 19.
§ 'Hypocrite Discovered,' p. 140.

examples, 'That word which is used among some parts of our English nation, *skath*, seems to come of the German word *schad*, and that of the Hebrew, *schadad*, שָׁדַד, he wasted;'* and 'St Luke tells us there came a multitude. The word there is ὄχλοις. It signifieth the mixt company or throng, which our English word doth very aptly express a *rabble*, which I think was borrowed of the Hebrew רב, *Rab*, which comes of רבב, *Rabab*, to multiply.'† Of the latter this may suffice, to wit, an explanation that, were it remembered, would prevent miserable mangling and misquotation of one of the grandest passages of 'The Tempest.' 'A strong imagination or fancy will persuade very much, and beguile both the eye and the ear. As, for instance, some when they look up to the *racke* or moving clouds, imagine them to have been the form of men, of armies, of castles, forests, landscapes, lions, bears, &c., where none else can see such things.'‡

The 'Hypocrite Discovered' is undoubtedly Torshell's best book. Even the 'Licenser'—Charles Herle—prefixes highly laudatory words concerning it: 'This choicely learned and accurately laboured treatise, I cannot let pass with a bare *imprimatur*.' Besides the pungency of Sydenham's little volume on the same subject, there is a combination of weighty truth with wit, deft sayings to enforce vital 'doctrines' that might else not go down, scintillations of humour, and fiery sparks of sarcasm, and, as already indicated, most felicitous working in to his own russet web the cloth-of-gold of a line from Dante or Petrarch, a jest from Montaigne, a sonorous stanza from 'Mr Herbert,' a story from Melchior Adam. Pity the world should be so frivolously neglectful of the wealth of illustration stored up in these and kindred old tomes.

The 'Saint's Humiliation' is not so lively as the 'Hypocrite Discovered.' *That* had not so beseemed 'the majesty of preaching,' of which Torshell had an high ideal. Neither has it that colouring and sparkle of the *written* as contrasted with the *spoken* words. But it is full as the honeycomb of precious and chastening truth. It gives us moreover graphic sketches of manners, such as might be culled from that wonderful old folio the 'Plea for Nineveh.'

The 'Three Questions' is keen in its distinctions, and puts very effectively the orthodox-evangelical opinions on its all-important topics. One or two brief quotations will no doubt be acceptable. He thus opens:—'The "Questions" are agitated of late, not without much heat, while one side careful, the other side fearful, of good works, do both strive for Christ, and mistake each other's grounds. . . . . Can we not dispute unless we contend?' Of Faith he thus cleverly retorts:—'They [Papists] say, If works be excluded, then are we justified by faith alone; if by faith alone, then would faith justify if it were alone. *Si sola, tum si esset sola.* I answer, That faith which justifies cannot be alone; so the apostle to these Galatians. v. 6, 'Faith that works by love.' Yet the inference is unworthy the quickness of a Jesuit, as if a man should say, If the eye see alone, then it will see if it be alone. Whereas we know (to give you the thing clear by this similitude), that although the eye alone see, yet if it were by itself alone it could not see at all. There is no part of my body can see an object visible and presented, not my eyelid, not my forehead, not my brain, but my eye only; yet if my eye was taken out of my head, I could discern nothing. We do not separate works from faith.'§

There is a striking use of one of the Lord's parables. Speaking of the ceremonial 'burden' of The Law, he makes the Jews object to the Gospel-doctrine of 'grace.' 'If, say they, the Law is not to justify, why then is it given? Why are we burdened with it? Why bound to obey it? Then as the envious workmen in the vineyard could not endure that such as had not wrought so much as they, should yet receive the same wages—Why have we toiled the whole day, if others, as well as we, receive every one a penny? Merit-mongers endure not the doctrine of a free grace, but murmur against the gospel as the chief priests against Christ's sermon.'‖

* 'Saint's Humiliation,' p. i. p. 46. † Ibid, pt. ii. p. 24. ‡ 'Designe,' p. 5. § Pages 20–22. ‖ Pages 146, 147

Excellently does he apportion 'Faith and Works.' 'Let not,' he says, 'Moses take the place of Christ; but yet make a right use of Moses. When works come in their own place, we can never perform enough of them. If we use them as our life, this were indeed to trample the blood of Christ under our feet, and to set Moses in His chair. But let the servant follow his Master; let Moses follow Christ; let the law follow grace; let works follow faith, that all may act their proper and designed parts.' * Finally, with impassioned and Baxter-like fervour he thus apostrophises believers:—'I may bespeak you as our Saviour in that parable to the loiterers, *Cur statis otiosi?* Why stand ye all the day idle? Why do ye dishonour your faith? Open the mouths of the adverse part? Bring a stain upon the professed religion? . . . . Work! for God's sake, for the faith's sake, for religion's sake, for your own sake, work. We spend away our times idly; one talks away his time, another sports away his time, another trades away his time; almost all do lavish it away." † The 'Design about Disposing the Bible' is worthy of Bacon. It is a magnificent conception, and betokens a very remarkable breadth of view and grasp. Reprinted in 'The Phœnix,' attention was revived to it; but it awaits competent scholarship and intellect to its achievement. His hitherto overlooked Funeral-Sermon on Moulson illustrates all his characteristics, especially his out-of-the-way learning. Here is a quaint conceit from it:—'He that went this way [of Death] the first of any mankind, was holy, a saint. It was Abel, whom God accepted. We use to call those passages and straits which have been first found and discovered by any, by the names of the first discoverers, as the Straits of *Magellanus*, and that a little lower, *Schouten* Strait or *Fretum le maire*. So if it may afford us any comfort for the passage, let us call death no longer Death, but *Abel's Straits*.' ‡ With regard to the 'Exercitation' on Malachi, now reprinted, it is necessarily brief as being merely supplementary to Stock; but it will be found suggestive in itself, and in its citations, if the latter be followed up. Not in it, however, but in his practical Writings, must we look for proof and memorial of the large intellect, and large heart, ripe scholarship, and great soul of SAMUEL TORSHELL.

And so we end our Memoirs of the twin-commentators on Malachi, whose old folio is now, after fully a couple of centuries, reprinted. Would that while we are without their outward contending through 'The Troubles,' we were more emulative of their intrepidity and witness-bearing in that warfare of the Church Militant, which demands leal and heroic service from every soldier of the Cross, that in the Future as in the Past, the 'enemy' may be 'bruised under our feet.'

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

KINROSS.

* Pages 298, 299. † Page 301. ‡ Page 246.

TO THE ANCIENT FRIENDS AND HEARERS OF THE AUTHOR, ESPECIALLY TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

# EDWARD RUDGE, ALDERMAN;

TO THE WORSHIPFUL

## CAPTAIN JOHN VEN, MR WILLIAM KENDALL, MR RICHARD ELLIS;

WITH THE REST OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF ALLHALLOWS, BREAD STREET, LONDON.

MY own occasions, together with some other difficulties and impediments, have hitherto hindered a purpose that I had, from the very first time that the papers of this worthy man were entrusted to me, to communicate them to the world and to you. But I have now done it, and I hope it is not too late, either to revive his memory, or your remembrance of those things you have heard from him. I will not believe that you have forgotten, or can forget, a pastor whom you did so much love and reverence; for he was a burning and shining light, and ye rejoiced in his light, John v. 35. I have taken this pains to peruse his notes, that he again, though dead, might still speak unto you, Heb. xi. 4; and I do endeavour that now after his decease you may have these things always in your remembrance, 2 Peter i. 15. God was pleased to send you a rich treasure by his ministry, but this treasure was brought unto you in an earthen vessel, 2 Cor. iv. 7; and lest haply when that earthen vessel was broke by sickness and death, and the sherds thrown into the earth, you saved not the treasure, I have now gathered some of it, and knowing to whom it did belong, have brought it back to restore it unto you. Now what remains but that you enjoy it and use it; let that be your care, to be answerable to the doctrine you have received, to walk so as ye have learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, Eph. iv. 21. This is the only thing that I have to say unto you, that your conversation may tell the world you do remember him. Let him live in your lives, that so even they who never knew him, nor ever heard him preach a sermon, may see by your practice what and how he preached. And as ye have made a monument for him in your church, set up one also in every one of your lives; you shall thereby do him a greater honour, than that stonework (though otherwise a commendable testimony of your love and respect) can do him. Be ye yourselves his monument, his statue, his trophy; and as the Philippians and Thessalonians were to St Paul his crown of glorying, Philip. iv. 1, 1 Thess. ii. 19, be ye his epistle known and read of all men, 2 Cor. iii. 2; let all men see what he writ in you, what precepts of holiness, of righteousness, of temperance, he wrote down in your hearts, when his tongue was the pen of a ready writer so long among you, Ps. xlv. 1. He was a father, I suppose, unto many of you. I have heard some of you profess it (though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers), 1 Cor. iv. 15. If in Jesus Christ he hath begotten you through the gospel, be followers of him, imitate him so as that men may say of you, when they see the grave, and sober, and godly carriage of any of you, He hath his father's countenance, he hath his father's gait. He set a most fair copy, do ye imitate the hand. He did as his great Master, he went before his flock, John x. 3, 4; and was an example of believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, 1 Tim. iv. 12. In all things he shewed himself a pattern, a stamp, τύπος, that is the apostle's word, Titus ii. 7; such a stamp as makes an image of it in coin, or such a stamp as printers use, which leaves an impression on the paper. Be ye his impression, be ye his printed work, be ye the commentary yourselves, and then ye need not buy it at the shops. He was *Typus Gregis*, be ye *Antitypon Pastoris;* go through the world like good and current coin, with the right stamp. Shew whose superscription and image you bear, Mat. xxii. 20; on one side God's, on the other side Cæsar's: and both stamped upon you by your pastor, who was wont to preach unto you those two

points, holiness and obedience. Shew that you suffered him, while you sat under his pulpit, to enter deep into your hearts. A deep stamp is long before it is worn out; let it appear that, these fifteen years since he died, you have not forgotten the word of his exhortation. They hear best that practise best, Luke xi. 28. If any of you be profane and unholy; if deceitful and dishonest in your dealings; if intemperate, voluptuous, and wanton: ye might haply be his hearers, and in the throng, but none of his disciples, but such as listened with the other ear to your lusts. But I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak, Heb. vi. 9; for I know your husbandman was skilful, and the seed good, Mat. xiii. 3, 1 Peter i. 23. Bear not therefore thorns and briars, for such ground is rejected and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned; but rather shew yourselves to be the earth that hath drunk in the rain that came oft upon you, and bring forth fruit, that so you may receive a further blessing from God. Unto whose blessing and most gracious protection I commend you, and remain,

Your servant in the Lord,

SAM. TORSHELL.

# TO THE READER.

THE holy Scriptures, that had so many praises given unto them by the ancients, were by them much read and studied, who used also many ways of interpreting them. We find their commentaries, ὑπομνήματα, that is, writings in which they set down heads for remembrances; interpretations, ἑρμηνεῖαι, that is, enarrations, as they called them, or examinations of the words; significations, σημασιαι; scholias, σχολία, that is, glosses which they writ at their leisures in their ordinary reading; metaphrases, delivering the text in other words; paraphrases, a larger and the noblest kind of interpreting; and homilies, sermons to the multitude, in which kind they were wont to undertake whole books, as appears by St Chrysostom, Augustine, and others. But afterwards, as the skill in Hebrew began by degrees, after the apostles' time, to be well nigh quite lost, so, when the Greek sun did also set, at length it came to pass that the Bible was scarce at all used. Till about *anno* 800, it was read over in greater churches once every year; about which time Paul Warnenfrid (usually called Paul the Deacon), at the command of Charlemagne, did inartificially divide out epistles and gospels, and writ postils on them, which soon came to be only in use, and all other parts of Scripture in a manner neglected. After his time some wrote commentaries, but rarely: as Aponius on the Canticles; Claudius Sesellius on St. Luke; Angelomus the monk on the Kings and Canticles; Walafridus Strabus, collector of the ordinary gloss; and Haimo on St Paul's Epistles; all of them much about Paul's time. But afterwards much more rarely: Paschasius Rabertus, abbot of Corbey, wrote upon the Lamentations; and Remigius, monk, and afterwards bishop of Auxerre, on the Psalms, Canticles, and Matthew, about *anno* 880; Ambrosius Ansbertus, a French monk, on the Canticles, *anno* 890; Bruno, archbishop of Colein, on the Pentateuch, *anno* 937. After him we find none till Paul of Genoa wrote on the Psalms and Jeremiah, which was *anno* 1054; only Bale mentions one Serlo, a monk of Dover, a commentator, about *anno* 956. And till 1100 or thereabouts, we find some, as Œcumenius, and the two Anselms, of Luca and Canterbury, and Stephanus Anglicus, Rupert, Bernard, and Philip, an abbot in Heinalt, a familiar friend of St Bernard's. But when once school divinity got the kingdom, all studied that, and laid the Scripture by. Peter Comestor indeed had the Scripture by heart; but his brother Lombard brought Aristotle into more request than St Paul, as the Sorbonne at Paris complained. Then it was that preaching on the Scripture had gone altogether out of use, had not Dominic, a Spaniard, the founder of the order of Preaching Friars, about *anno* 1200, commanded his disciples to read the Scripture, and carry nothing but the Bible with them when they went to preach. And yet by these pretended friends of the Scripture was the Scripture likewise trampled upon, who preferred Dominic before St Paul, according to that picture of them both in one table, which John Wolfius * tells us was not much after that time to be seen in Venice. Under St Paul's was writ, *By him you may go to Christ;* and under Dominic's picture, *By him you may go to Christ more easily.* And so things stood till these latter times, when, about the time of Reformation, the Bible was a book scacely so much as known; when Melancthon reports he heard some preach upon texts taken out of Aristotle's Ethics; and Andreas Carolostadius was eight years doctor when he began to read the Scripture, and yet at the taking of his degree had been pronounced *sufficientissimus.* But that which I shall content myself with as an instance for all is that which is reported of Albert, archbishop of Mentz, who, being at the Diet at Augsburg, *anno* 1530, and finding a Bible on the table, and reading some leaves where by chance he opened it, said, *Truly I know not what book this is; but this I see, that it makes all against us.* But when the knowledge of the tongues began to flourish, then the study of Scripture revived; for till a little before the Reformation there were few or none that cared for, or endeavoured, any skill in the Greek, much less in the Hebrew; yea, most were then of John Dullard's mind, who was schoolmaster to Ludovicus Vives,† and was wont to say unto him, *The better grammarian thou provest, thou wilt be the worse philosopher and divine.* We know what opposition Erasmus met withal in this cause; and Arias Montanus, for his pains in the *Biblia Regia*, was accused of heresy before the Pope (it seems by his preface before the Bible, they were Jesuits that so accused him), so that he was fain to write an apology for himself (which he did in the Spanish tongue), which is in Oxford Library. Yet

* John Wolf. Lect. Memor. tom. i. cent. 13, ad anno 1205.
† Ludov. Viv. de Caus. Corrup. lib. ii.

at length the Jesuits themselves, and others of the Church of Rome, were drawn to have a better opinion of this kind of learning; and the learned party grew so strong, that it came at least to a consultation in the Council of Trent,* about the examining of the vulgar Latin translation of the Bible by the originals. Friar Aloisius of Catanea took the confidence to give an high commendation to Cardinal Cajetan, as the prime divine of that and many ages, who was wont to say, that to understand the Latin text was not to understand God's infallible word, but the translators; and therefore having himself no knowledge in the originals, he employed men to render the Scripture word for word unto him, and so spent all his latter days, which were eleven years after his going legate into Germany. Upon this relation, Aloisius propounded the examination. But there were too many to oppose so good a proposition. They said it would be ten years in doing; that if they did it, they should open a gap to the Lutherans, and overthrow many doctrines of the Roman Church which were grounded on the Latin translation; and that if they should do it, the inquisitors would not be able to proceed against the Lutherans, who would be always ready to say, It is not so in the original.† These were honest men, and spoke plainly, by whom we come to know what it was that hindered the work. Others were more fine, and they said, that it was to be believed that the Latin Church was not less beloved of God than the Hebrew or Greek Church, who had an authentic text; and sure the Holy Ghost dictated the Latin translation, or if the translator had not a prophetical spirit, yet one very near it. But Isidorus Clarus, a Brescian, a Benedictine abbot, went against this unreasonable opinion, and said much against it, which the reader may find in the judicious history of the Council. However, the stream went to the approbation of the vulgar, only the Cardinal Santacroce, that he might comply fairly with those that voted for a correction, told them that there were no errors of faith in it, and yet yielded that six might be deputed to frame a corrected copy to print by. But what correction was meant, appears by the preface before the edition of Clement the Eighth, that it should be purged from the *errata* of the transcribers. And they were long about this. The preface tells us, that Pius the Fourth and Fifth laboured in it, and selected cardinals; but the business was, through the occasions of the Roman See, intermitted more than twenty years from the dissolving of the Council, till Sixtus the Fifth performed it. Lucas Burgensis in a particular tract hath collected all the corrections made in that edition. That of Sixtus was two or three years after purged by Clement the Eighth, and yet Burgensis hath found a catalogue of errata still, and brings in Bellarmine confessing as much; and yet the work from the first to the last was not less than of forty-six years, and boasted of with high and papal language. Sixtus his Bull is now left out of the Bibles, and so is Clement's *Breve Apostolicum* out of most, which yet the reader shall find carefully preserved and to good use, by Amama in his *Antibarbarus Biblicus*.* We for our part count no translation authentical, and esteem it a tyranny, both in the Popish and Lutheran Churches, that no man without circumlocutions and insinuations and apologies may shew the very least dissent.

But the strife about the translation equals not that which hath been about the sense. The Acts that have been used by the Romanists for the settling and establishing the right of interpretation upon the bishop of Rome have been well known, whereby they have laboured to make him the oracle to the world, as the Turkish Mufti is (by the relation of Busbequius †) in those parts; finding it to be the most expedite way to gain the opinion of the public and authorised interpreter. But we have little reason to yield over the title to him, knowing how ready he and his servants are to make advantage of every thing that hath any likelihood to advance them; yea, how they wrest and abuse scriptures to the maintenance of every cause of theirs, especially the intolerable pride and usurpations of the pope. An instance of this we have in that notable observation which my Lord of Canterbury his Grace ‡ hath made upon the frontispiece of John de Puente his book of *The Agreement of the Two Catholic Monarchies*, where the text, Gen. i. 16, is applied as Innocentius had done long before, and the words *luminare majus*, the greater light, are over the portraiture of Rome. An observation out of a picture, whereby his grace hath done the same service for the discovery of the Romish arts, which that other noble protestant, my Lord Duplessis, § did out of another picture or frontispiece printed before two books, one at Bononia, An. 1608, the other at Naples, An. 1609, wherein Pope Paul the Fifth is lively pictured in a table with this inscription:—To Paul the Fifth, Vice-God, the most Invincible Monarch of the Christian Commonwealth, and the most stout maintainer of the Pontifician omnipotency. This table hangs within a triumphal arch, on either side hung with crowns, diadems, and sceptres, after the several fashions and wearings of the kings of the whole world. At the foot of the arch sit, on the one hand, Europe and Africa, with these words of the prophet, 'Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers;' on the other hand, Asia and America, with the following words, 'With their face towards the earth, they shall lick up the dust of thy

* Hist. Conc. Trid.

† Amama hath collected those particular errors, in his Cens. Vulg. Edit. cap. i. proleg.

* Antib. Bibl. p. 162.

† Busbeq. epist. 3.

‡ Archb. of Cant. in his second and enlarged edition of his most learned relation of the Confe. sect. xxvi. nu. 12, p. 209.

§ Myster. Iniqui. in prefat.

feet,' Isa. xlix. 23. Above there are winged scrolls: in one upon the right hand, over some ruins of buildings, is that text in Jer. xxvii. 8, but somewhat altered, 'The nation and kingdom which will not serve him, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence.' In the other on the left hand, that place, Dan. vii. 14, applied with more blasphemy, 'There was given him dominion and a kingdom, and all people shall serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' Others also of them have been as bold with the holy text. The Bishop of Bitonto, in his sermon at the opening of the Council at Trent,* advising men to obey the council, said, Else it will be said, the pope's light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. So applying the text, John iii. 18. But the judicious writer of the history notes it, that many were offended with that speech. It will always prove an entangled title to the pope. Who then must be the judge? Erasmus is fain to leave his butcher and fishmonger wrangling in this point, and when they have said all, yet unresolved.† There are many that would cast it upon the fathers, and that we must stand to what they say. But that were to make them not expounders, but lawgivers. We regard them highly, but yield them not the royalty of a mint, as Mornay speaks; besides, we neither find all dificulties explicated by them, nor in what they do explicate an agreement.‡ In the very Council of Trent, another saying of Cardinal Cajetan's, that a new sense of Scripture is not to be rejected, though it be against the old doctors, seeing power is left now also to interpret, was by some much commended, who thought it a tyranny to forbid the faithful the use of their own proper ingenie; others indeed opposed it, accounting licence worse than tyranny: among others, Richard of Mans, a Franciscan friar, went so far as to say, The doctrine of faith is now so cleared, that we ought to learn it no more out of the Scriptures, which heretofore were read in the church for instruction, but now only are read to pray by, not to study. There were not many that adhered to him; the better part delivered themselves as Dominicus à Soto did, that it was fit to keep every wit within limits for matters of faith and manners, but else to leave them to their liberty for the sense. Others of them yet more plainly, that it was not fit to restrain the understanding of the Scriptures to the fathers only, whose expositions were most part allegorical, seldom literal, and those fitted to their own time. And many men have profitably used their liberty, especially such as have sought out the literal sense. The allegory, Luther calls it a beauteous whore, § that enticeth idle men, who think themselves in paradise and God's bosom, when they fall upon such speculations. Such was their interpretation, who, by the clean beasts in the ark, understood virgins, and by the unclean, married persons.* And theirs upon Ps. lxxiv. 13, 'Thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters,' that is, devils are expelled by holy water sprinkled by the priests. Luke v. 4, *Duc in altum;* that is, Peter, go thou to Rome, the head and chief city, and there spread thy net! 1 Kings xvii. 6, Crows brought flesh to Elijah; that is, laymen are to give all necessary things to monks. Solomon Glassius hath collected many examples.† I will only add that of Antonius, archbishop of Florence, upon Zech. xi. 7, of Dominic and his order.‡ Zechariah spake in the person of God, I took unto me two staves: the one I called beauty, and the other (*funiculum*) bands: beauty is the order of preachers, *funiculus*, the order of minors, who are girt with a cord! Thus, as the camels they drink not of the fountain till they have puddled it with their feet, St Jerome had been much delighted this way, but found his own error. When I was young (saith he §), I interpreted the prophet Obadiah allegorically, because I was ignorant of the history. I thought then I could read a sealed book. No man can write so ill, but some will like it. Such a one praised it, but I blushed; I now freely profess, that was the work of my childish wit, this of my mature age. But I shall not need to enlarge against this, which even Salmeron and Ribera, and other Jesuits themselves, have inveighed against. But the literal sense is the most noble and on all hands most allowed; and that sense our learned and reverend author, Mr Richard Stock, hath everywhere sought and followed throughout this his plain and most wholesome commentary on Malachi, everywhere observing so many of those circumstances as his text would give him leave to observe, which Glassius hath put together into two verses:

Quis, scopus, impellens, sedes, tempusque, locusque,
Et modus, hæc septem scripturæ attendito lector.

The author, scope, occasion, theme, time, place, and next
The form. These seven let him attend that reads the text.

I have published him out of his own original notes, and as largely as himself writ; only whereas on the third chapter, verse the seventh, he had more largely treated of the doctrine of repentance, upon the request of his auditory, who desired him to divert his ordinary course, as appears by his dedicatory epistle to the Lord William Knowls, that I have omitted, because himself did publish it in his lifetime, *anno* 1608.

I have followed his own manner in the publishing of this, and have set his quotations of fathers and

* Hist. Conc. Trid. lib. ii. Adan, 1545.
† Eras. Colloq., ἰχθυοφαγία.
‡ D. Fr. White, Orth. Faith, chap. iv. par. 1.
§ Luth. in Gen. xxx.

* See Bp. Morton Appl. pn. 2, lib. v. chap. xv.
† Philol. Sacr. lib. ii. Tr. 2, pt. sect. iii. art iv.
‡ Anton. Hist. part iii., Tit. xxiii.
§ Jer. in proleg. ad Obad.

other Latin authors in their own words in the margin, and the Greek fathers, rendered into Latin, because many readers understand not the Greek, which is his own reason given in his epistle to the reader, before that treatise. Out of which epistle of his I will also answer to those that may dislike his frequent use of the fathers, in his own words. If any (saith he) dislike my alleging of fathers, (as some have my using of reasons to confirm the doctrine, but with very little reason as I suppose) I must pray them to give me leave to use them, till I can see that unlawfulness which they affirm to be in the practice; and to censure me in charity for the use of them, as I do them for not using them. I will look as well to my heart in the use of them, as God shall enable me, and when I shall see the hurt of them, I will as much endeavour to avoid them; in the mean time I will make the best use I can of them, to edify the church of God.

But I will detain thee no longer in a preface, but commend the book to thy reading, and that to God's blessing.

Thine in the Lord,

Sam. Torshell.

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# A BREVIAT OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN BY MR GATAKER TO MR RICHARD STOCK, AT HIS FUNERAL SERMON.

THAT the reader, if he were not acquainted with the author of this commentary in his lifetime, may know what he was, I have thought fit to present unto him a briefer view of that more large testimony which Mr Thomas Gataker, preaching at his funeral, did deservedly give him.

After he hath commended him for his unweariable industry and singular proficiency in his own, and his ability and willingness to be helpful to others' studies, even while he was young in the college, he descends to the consideration of him in his public calling, that he proved a painful, a faithful minister of Christ, a skilful, a powerful dispenser of God's word.

The proofs of which were his constant and incessant employments in preaching twice every Sabbath for many years, besides his catechising the younger sort in the week days (which he did with notable discretion), the males and females apart, the riper and forwarder in the presence of the ruder and rawer, and then the rawer by themselves, together with other offices of his pastoral function, privately performed.

Which ministry of his was very effectual, so that besides many other Christian souls converted by him (in which success few ministers were to be compared with him), many faithful ministers also received their first beginnings of light and spiritual life and grace from his ministry, so that he did not only win many souls, but many winners of souls.

Those two things which make a complete man had an happy conjunction in him, namely, integrity and judgment. The proofs of which were both the desire that many had to use him for the oversight of their last wills, and for the disposing of their estates; and that so many reverend ministers from all parts of the realm did, by letters or otherwise, usually seek to him for the resolution of their doubts.

As these made him a complete man, so he had that which made him a complete minister, namely, that he could speak his mind fitly, and that he durst speak it freely. For the former, his ability to express himself with clear method, sound proofs, choice words, fit phrase, pregnant similitudes, plentiful illustrations, pithy persuasions, sweet insinuations, powerful enforcements, allegations of antiquity, and variety of good literature; he was such an one as many strove to imitate, not many of them matched. For the other, his freedom of speech in reproving of sin, even to the faces of the greatest, many are able to testify, and some accidents made it more publicly known than his desire was it should have been.

Among other particular commendations of him, one was his zealous and earnest pursuit of reformation of some profanations of the Sabbath, wherein he prevailed also for the alteration of some things in that kind offensive, as well with the main body of the city as with some particular societies. Another was his pious care and diligence in the religious instruction and education of those that were under his private charge, children and others.

In these and the like employments he spent his time, he spent his strength, till God put an end to his incessant labours here, and translated him to the place of his endless rest.

# THE SUM OR ARGUMENT OF THE WHOLE PROPHECY.

THE Israelities provoked to anger and heavy displeasure, by their sins, the Monarch of the whole world. Wherefore, he being thus displeased, sent against them Nebuchadnezzar, who took them, and carried the king, his princes, and the whole people, into Babel, after that he had spoiled their stately temple, destroyed their strong walls, and laid waste Jerusalem itself, where they endured seventy years' exile and banishment; which years expired, they were again brought to their country, when and where better things were expected from them, both in way of thankfulness and in remembrance of their former captivity, lest a worse thing should afterwards befall them. But they, forgetful of former things, both beatings and benefits, as children are, returned to their sins, polluted the divine worship, gave themselves to divers vices, began to make marriages with infidels, again embraced polygamy, took up the custom of giving bills of divorce, committed sacrileges, cast out strange contempts against God, and blasphemies. By all which the Lord being again provoked, sent the prophet Malachi to reprove them sharply, and to threaten them severely with certain new judgments, and to the impenitent certain and final destruction; yet, in the mean time, cheering up the good with comforts, provoking them to repentance, persuading them to faith in Christ, refreshing them with many sweet promises.

Now it is no hard thing to make the comparison, and apply these things to our times, that it may appear the handling of this is no unfit thing, but apt to the time.

For the sins of the land God was displeased, and gave over the people to captivity (though in their own land somewhat less than this, yet it was) both of body and soul to a new Nebuchadnezzar, which makes it the greater, the church and spiritual Jerusalem much defaced, the relics of it partly put to flight, partly to the fire. But see how good God was, after a time he brought again our captivity. After which he looked for better things from us, and haply had them while the benefit was fresh, and the bondage yet felt. But see, these are worn out of mind, and we again have committed great sins against God, by which we justly have provoked God's indignation against us, yea and alas, we cease not to provoke it; for how great contempt of the service of God is there in every place! what profaneness! what corruption of manners! what unfaithfulness in covenant breaking! what uncleanness in marriage! what horrible oaths! what fearful perjuries! what execrable blasphemies against the Highest! not in mean persons, but of the highest ranks; not in countries only, but in famous cities; not in mean men's cottages only, but in noble men's places and palaces, in church and commonwealth: so that the Lord may say to us, as he said to Israel by Malachi, chap. i. 6, because neither honour nor fear be performed to him. So that not only just are those plagues that are come upon us, pestilence to the body now almost three years, and famine to the soul begun, and threatened more, but also particular and general judgments. Whatsoever is in this prophecy may justly both be threatened and executed upon us; when it is just with God, where like sins are, to bring upon them like punishments.

This is the reason of my choice, as also the sum and argument of this prophecy.

The parts of it are diverse. After the inscription, or preface, we have,

1. Expostulations with the people and priests touching their great and grievous sins.
2. Threatenings of punishments deserved by them.
3. Prophecies of the calling of the Gentiles, and the coming of Christ.
4. Exhortations to repentance, and exercise of the duties of piety.

All which are to be found promiscuously, and intermixed one with another; the particular resolution of which is better in their place, and more profitable, than now to spend time in pointing out every particular where it is to be found.

The time when this prophecy was written is, in general, after they were returned from their captivity; more special, after Haggai and Zachariah, the two prophets of the church; and yet more, after the building and finishing the temple about some twenty-four years,

for it was built in the sixth year of Darius, king of Persia, Ezra vi. Haggai and Zachariah the second year of Darius (after some forty-one years' interruption of the work, all the time of Artashashte or Artaxerxes Longimanus) prophesied, and persuaded the people to build it; who, by the favour and exhibition of the king, did finish the work in his sixth year, who reigned in all thirty, after the finishing of the temple twenty-four. After whose days, in the time of Artaxerxes Darius, his successor, our prophet began to prophesy, being the last of all such as did prophesy, till the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist.

# AN EXPOSITION UPON THE WHOLE BOOK OF THE PROPHECY OF MALACHI.

## CHAPTER I.

*The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the ministry of Malachi. I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and made his mountains waste, and his heritage a wilderness for dragons. Though Edom say, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; yet saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will destroy it; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people with whom the Lord is angry for ever. And your eyes shall see it, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified upon the border of Israel. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer unclean bread upon mine altar; and you say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is not to be regarded. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is not evil; and if ye offer the lame and sick, it is not evil; offer it now unto thy prince; will he be content with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. And now, I pray you, pray before God that he may have mercy upon us: this hath been by your means: will he reward your persons? saith the Lord of hosts. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors, and kindle not fire on mine altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye have polluted it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat is not to be regarded. Ye said also, Behold, it is a weariness, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye offered that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye offered an offering: should I accept this at your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is terrible among the heathen.*
—Malachi I.

THE parts of this chapter are two:

1. A preface or inscription.
2. The oracle or prophecy.

1. The preface in the first verse, general to the whole.
2. The prophecy in the rest.

1. An expostulation with the people and priest for their ingratitude and corrupting of his worship, from verse 2d to the 9th.
2. A commination of judgment deserved by it, or a commination of divers judgments, from verse 9 to the end.

In the preface or inscription we conceive two things: The substance and circumstance of it.

1. The substance, being the subject or matter of the whole, is in that it is called a *burden*.
2. The circumstance of the person, which is threefold.
   (1.) *From whom*, as the efficient.
   (2.) *To whom*, as the object.
   (3.) *By whom*, as the instrument.

Ver. 1. *The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by the ministry of Malachi.*

*The burden.* Here is the matter or subject of this book or prophecy. He calleth it a burden, usual with prophets in their writings, almost in some place or other. But Nahum, Habakkuk, and Malachi thus begin their prophecies. It signifies, as Jerome, a woful and sorrowful prophecy, full of threats and judgments; called therefore a burden, because it presseth those against whom it is spoken, the hearts and spirits of them, as a burden the body, and suffers them not to lift up their heads, and themselves, as in former times. Some think it signifies not only this, but also the commandment of the Lord, by which the prophet was burdened as from the Lord, that he should declare it in so many words unto Israel, which they think follows thence, because it is *to* Israel, not *against;* but I fear this is somewhat nice, for it was so to them, as it was against them for their sins, and that which is against is as much as a burden to the prophet. But this must be understood *tropicè*, here being a synedoche; for the whole prophecy is not a burden, or threatening of punishment, but part only of it, and so the whole is denominated of the part.

*Doct.* The punishment of sin, the affliction God inflicts upon men for their sins and transgressions, is a burden, not a light one, not such as are the feathers of a bird, *onus sine onere*, but as a 'talent of lead,' spoken of Zech. v. 7, heavy and grievous. So is it here, and in many places of the prophets, as Nah. i. 1, Hab. i. 1, Jer. xxiii. 33; *fine*, he shews what is the burden: 'I will cast you off, and send you into Babel captives,' ver. 36; that is, whosoever shall say, The burden, he shall for that word bear his burden; that is, be punished of the Lord. It is proved further by Mat. vii. 9, Gal. vi. 8. Hence it is the complaint of David, Ps. xxxii. 4, 'Thy hand was heavy upon me.'

*Reason* 1. Because sin, the deserving and procuring cause, is a very grievous burden, Ps. xxxviii. 4, Mat. xxvii. 38; that is, to living men, and such as have the use of their senses; not to dead and benumbed men. Then the punishment is grievous.

*Reason* 2. Because the wrath and displeasure of God, which is the efficient cause of it, is very heavy and grievous. The displeasure of a prince is heavy, the king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion, Prov. xix. 12. Now, hence are afflictions heavy and burdensome.

*Reason* 3. Because none can give ease in it, or deliver from it, save God only, Hosea i. 6, 1 Sam. ii. 25, 2 Kings vi. 26, 27. The wound that is had by the biting of a scorpion is grievous, when nothing can cure it but the ashes of that scorpion; much more this.

*Use* 1. This may teach us what to judge of those men who are in some affliction, under a judgment, and yet find no burden, but go as light under them, as a bird doth under her feathers, and sometimes make advantage of them, as beggars do make gain of their sores; they are senseless, they are benumbed, they are dead men. In common sense, if any have half an hundredweight laid upon his hand or foot, and pressing him sore, and he feel it not, what judgment is to be given of it, but to be a mortified and a dead member? So, alas, how many dead men are in our times and days! The burden, not of the word only, but of the rod of the Lord, not threatened, but executed, hath been upon our land and church by the fearful plague. Now well towards three years we have walked in the land of the dead, we have been in the house of mourning. Indeed, the living hath laid it to his heart, but so few have done it, that the dead are more than the living; not only our wanton women, and voluptuous men, to whom that 1 Tim. v. 6, 'They are dead while they live,' but our worldly men, our ambitious, and others, all dead, for this they have not felt. We sorrowed for fifty and odd thousands that died in the former year; we have as much need to sorrow for so many thousands yet living, and dead amongst us. They never indeed felt, nor yet do feel, this burden; their irreligious carriage when it was here amongst us, both at home and abroad, in the city and abroad, their small conformity since to the law of God, little reforming of their corruptions, nay, their monstrous deformity in themselves, wives, and children, persuades my heart, as it is Ps. xxxvi. 1, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, there is no fear of God before my eyes;' so that they had no feeling of this at all; for they who truly felt it would grow somewhat better, if not altogether reformed. If an heathenish people, who knew not God, at the burden of the word of the Lord did so humble themselves, that the Lord said, Jonah iii. 10, 'He repented of the evil he said he would do to you, and did it not,' what should be thought of Christian men by profession, living in the church of God, if at the burden of his word they repent not, nor depart from their evil ways, but, Isa. i. 5, 'though they be stricken, revolt more and more'? It is because they are dead men, and cannot feel it. Oh, then, weep not for me, but for yourselves and children, as those; not for the departed, but for the living dead; for if it be true, the beginning of the remedy is the sense and acknowledgment of the malady, how far are they from cure that have not yet the feeling of it! I feared the plague by a natural infirmity, though God enabled me to abide upon my calling in the hottest brunt of it, and mercifully preserved me hitherto to his church, and to speak this to you this day. But if it should now come by the providence of God upon me, that he begins to threaten it to the city, I should willingly embrace it, as thinking God to be marvellous merciful unto me; and whosoever he should smite by it, to take it thus into his own hand, and not to leave us to more fearful judgment, which I cannot say but I marvellously fear is even at the door, to the wakening of dead men and women, or the sweeping of them away. I am no

prophet, I pray God my words be no prophecy, but 'what peace,' &c.

*Use* 2. This ought to teach men in affliction, if a judgment come, and imposed by the hand of God, to bear it patiently and meekly, as David, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, for it is a burden. The way to be eased is not struggling with it, but meekly to bear it. For a prisoner to be free from his fetters is not in the jailor's sight to seek to break them, or to file them off: that is the way to procure more, or the longer lying in them; so to be eased of a burden is not to wrestle with it when one is under it, but to go softly; there is more ease while it is on his back, and sooner comes he to be released of it. A man may with impatiency wrestle and use unlawful means to ease himself, and God haply will let them prosper for a while; but after he will bring a more heavy and inevitable burden on him, that with his former shifts shall make more heavy to him. There is a fable, but it hath his moral for this purpose. A certain ass, laded with salt, fell into a river, and after he had risen, found his burden lighter, for the moisture made it melt away; whereupon he would ever after lie him down in the water as he travelled with his burden, and so ease himself. His owner perceiving his craft, after laded him as heavy with wool. The ass purposing to ease himself, as before, laid himself down in the next water, and thinking to have ease, rising again to feel his weight, found it heavier, as it continued with him all the day. The moral is, that they who impatiently seek means contrary to the will of God, to ease themselves of their burden, shall have it more and more increase upon them.

*Use* 3. That men should make a special restraint to themselves to keep from sinning, because an heavy and grievous burden else is ready to be laid upon their shoulders. Sin itself is an heavy burden, but few feel it and fewer fear it, but to this burden shall the burden of punishment be added; and who is sufficient for these things? If the first burden fear them not, because there is some pleasure in sin to the flesh, yet let the second, which hath no pleasure at all. When thou are tempted to sin, by which thou must needs tempt and provoke God, learn to cast thy accounts well; 'consult if thou be able to meet him that comes against thee,' Luke xiv. 31; so, if thou beest able to meet him and bear his burden, go on and spare not, delight in all thy ways, restrain thyself from no sin; but if not, if we may invert and resolve, 'do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?' 1 Cor. x. 22; then let this restrain us, if nothing else will; let us imitate porters, who, called and offered money to bear a burden, will poise and weigh the burden in their hands first, which, when they see they are not able to bear, no gain will entice them; so in this case let us do.

*Of the word of the Lord.* The circumstance of the person sending, the efficient, and author, as of other prophecies, so of this; he comes not unsent, he spoke not of himself, he came not without the Lord, but from him. So he affirmeth, and truly, to get more reverence, credit, and authority with them. And that it was thus from the Lord, and so canonical, the testimonies of Christ and his apostles, alleging him divers times for confirmation of doctrine and reformation of manners, proveth it; but he addeth 'the word of the Lord,' not only to shew that he had but the word,—the rod and execution would come after, God making his word good,—but, as some think, to shew that he had not a free embassage, but that he was to deliver it in certain and set prescribed words. Sometime, when prophets were more frequent and perpetual in the church, and God spoke to them by dreams or by visions and apparitions, they had divers kinds of words, and had liberty for divers manners of speaking and delivery; but our prophet was such a messenger, that the commandment he had received and was credited with he must deliver in so many words, and the same he received them in; and so he doth, for in the whole he never useth his own person, but the Lord only, as chap. i. 2, and ii. 1, and iii. 1, and iv. 1.

Here we might observe that the writers of the Scriptures are not the authors, but God himself, of which Rev. ii. 7. But one particular may we herein observe, this following:

*Doct.* This prophecy is the very word of the Lord. It is of divine, not human authority, which is not only here affirmed, but, lest it should be doubtful, it hath the testimony of the New Testament: the 3d chap. ver. 1, hath testimony, Mark i. 2; and chap. iv. 2 hath testimony, Luke i. 78; and chap. i. 2, 3, Rom. ix. 23.

*Reason* 1. Because this was written by a prophet, for, as all the Old Testament was written by the prophets, so whatsoever was written by them was and is canonical Scripture; therefore, 2 Peter i. 19, Luke xvi. 39, Heb. i. 1, Eph. ii. 20. Now all men hold Malachi for a prophet, the last among the Jews till the coming of John Baptist.

*Reason* 2. Because the church of the Jews, the only church of God, did receive this, and so acknowledged it as the word of God. That they did so appears Mat. xvii. 10, and the apostles and the evangelists alleging of it, for it is a far more impious and heinous thing to take away scripture than corruptly to interpret them, or to add scripture if it were not of it.

*Use* 1. I take instructions from hence, entering the opening and expounding of this prophecy, how I ought to labour with my own heart, and to seek from the Lord assistance and grace to handle this as his word, not carelessly, handling the word and work of God negligently, taking his name in vain, coming to speak out of it without due preparation and constant study and speaking; so talk as of the word of God, 1 Peter iv. 11; not handling it with vanity, and affectation; not making merchandise and playing the huckster

with it; delivering it with a sincere affection, dealing faithfully with it as a faithful dispenser, giving to every one his portion where and to whom the Spirit of God hath set them down,—to priest and people, to old and to young, to married and unmarried, to the good and profane,—without fear and flattery, or any other sinister affections, remembering that this in the first is in the whole, and to every verse, it is the word of the Lord, fearing to corrupt as well as to add, lest that I hear, as it is Prov. xxx. 6, 'Add not to his words lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar;' remembering that of Luke xii. 42, that I may be a faithful and wise steward; that I may obtain that, ver. 43, 44, which, how soon it may be general or to me in particular, whether before I have gone through the whole, or this chapter, or this verse, I know not.

*Use* 2. This teacheth all to whom I am to speak: first, they must hear, for it is the word of the Lord, and never withdraw themselves negligently, or carelessly preferring vain pleasure and profit of no value before it. 'If any withdraw himself, the soul of God shall have no pleasure in him,' (to use the words rather than the full sense), as Israel said to Sihon, king of the Amorites; so wouldst not thou hear that thy prince, father, or master saith unto thee; nay, will not idolaters hear that which their gods say unto them; how much more you that the Lord shall speak to? This is the word; that we shall speak is but the delivering of it in more words, which is here set down in fewer, pressing it at large which is here set down more briefly; this as a clew of thread wound up, by us it is but drawn out at length; yea, and it must be heard, as the word of God, with all reverence, received with humility, believed by faith, obeyed with care, for the Lord having spoken it, it was not for the time and persons present only, but for all successive ages and people. As the laws of princes and decrees of parliaments are not only for them that live then, but for whosoever shall afterwards be born subjects to the same sovereigns, therefore not any sin is here reproved but it is reproved in whomsoever it is found; nor is there any judgment threatened but menaced against the men of our time that hear it, not any duty commanded but it is appertaining to us as to them, because it is the word of the Lord, who is our Lord as well as theirs, of the Gentiles as of the Jews. I cannot say as Daniel iv. 19, *fine*, so the prophecy is for others, and the interpretation of it is for others, and judgments to your enemies; but as Peter, Acts ii. 39, 'it is to you and to your children;' so these things here commanded and reproved are for you and your children. But why should I speak thus sharply unto you? Verily, because God will nevertheless bring these, if I should hold my peace, and by speaking I may prevent he should not, if so be my exhortations this day may find place in your hearts, and hereafter in your lives. But shall I come unto you, not with a rod, but in love, and the spirit of meekness? 1 Cor. iv. 21; then as Chrysostom, *ad pop. Antioch. Hom.* 27, by our mutual love, yours and mine, by all the travail I have felt for you, till Christ be formed in you fully, Gal. iv. 19, give me that wherein I may glory before men and devils, and in the presence of God. And what is my glory? but your progress and increase in piety here, and your salvation in the life to come. Believe me, beloved, *Si fieri potest me pro vobis certamen bene gerere, vos autem bene gestæ rei præmia ferre, nunquam profectò vobis tantum turbationis ingererem; sed non licet hoc nobis, non licet, inquam.* Chrysostom. *de virtut. et vitiis sermo.* If it were possible for me to undergo the combat, and you to bear the trophies of the victory, I would not put you to so much trouble. But this may not be, this may not be, for every one must live by his own faith, and pass to heaven by his own piety and obedience. It is neither bought nor borrowed oil in our lamps will serve to enter in with the bridegroom.

*To Israel.* The second person, *to whom*, as the subject, to Israel, that is, to the whole people who were lately delivered out of captivity, and now enjoyed their land and the liberty of religion; and as men not sufficiently instructed under the rod and cross, or forgetting their former calamities, returned to their former corruptions and sins, whose sins were the worse by that they had received, and made the more inexcusable; when they should have been bettered by his mercies they grew worse. By Israel he understands the whole company, both priest and people, calling it Israel, which for distinction was before called Judah, after the rent happened betwixt the ten and two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, and some of Levi to the house of David, and the rest to Jeroboam; for the ten tribes by Shalmaneser were so led into captivity that they never returned; he now called these two tribes by the old and wonted name. To Israel, then, his own people, chosen out of the world, yea, reserved to himself from those ten tribes, thus specially beloved, he sends, though with grief, this threatening.

*Doct.* God will punish his, even his own, for their sins and offences, how dear soever they be unto him; it is indeed his love unto them that he will pass by many infirmities and weakness in them, as Mat. vii. 18, but yet sins of greater nature, habit, and custom, he will not pass by unpunished, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 18; not only the threatenings, but the execution of many afflictions and plagues recorded in the word, upon the whole church of Israel, upon particular persons, on Moses, Num. xx., on Miriam, Num. i., David often, and other the good kings who were punished, prove this manifestly.

*Reason* 1. Because he loves his own, therefore will he correct and punish them; for the sparing of the rod is hatred, not love; *nulla ira, magna ira;* the fondness of affection, not the favour of judgment, Prov. xiii. 24. It is love because of that: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we

are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.'

*Reason* 2. Because he would be justified, not as wisdom of her children only, but even of wicked and enemies; for if he should spare his own, then would they say, God were wicked like them, as the wicked when he spares themselves, say Ps. l. 21. Hence was the death of David's child denounced, and performed, to prevent or to stay the blasphemy of the wicked, 2 Sam. xii. 14, as he insinuates in his psalm of repentance, Ps. li. 4.

*Reason* 3. Because he may manifest his hatred of sin when he punisheth it not in those that are wicked only, whose persons he may seem to hate, but in those that are dear to him.

*Use* 1. If God will and must deal thus with his own, general and particular, let the whole church and every member think of it, that they be not deceived, as if to them there were no fear of judgments and punishments, though they fear not sin, because they are his. It is such a corruption and deceit that may seize upon those who are his, even truly his, though usually they are deceived by the sleight of Satan, whom he hath before deceived with another, persuading them they are gods when they are not; for commonly none so confident as those, none so bold as these blind byards;* but whosoever he is that is tainted with this, let him know, that as the husbandman preserveth the sheep of his pasture in a moist year from rotting in the heart and liver, when they are a little tainted, by the salt waters of the sea, so may he be recovered and preserved by those waters of the sanctuary, even by those salt waters, when the stream runs thus, that he will not, nor he hath not spared those who are as dear to him as the apple of his eye (untoothsome haply may they be, but without doubt wholesome they are). Let no church, then, trust in lying words, Jer. vii. 4, if they continue in their wickedness, ver. 9, and make his house a den of thieves, ver. 11, but let them know he sees it, and go to Shiloh, ver. 12, and other churches, and see what he hath done to them, and the like will he do to it, ver. 14. Let no particular man think he may sin, as presuming he is God's; for if he spared not Moses, Miriam, David, and others, how him? Could they not have challenged more than he? Or is it not likely that God would have spared them as well as he? Let him think of that to Solomon: 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of iron; but my mercy shall not depart from him,' 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. If God make it true in him, it is the best he can look for. If any ask, What benefit it is to be God's? I answer, Much every way; as that God will pass by many infirmities of thine when thou servest him, many sins of passion when they are not continued in. Have you not heard of the patience of Job? Again, is it no benefit to be his father's heir, unless he may be suffered to do what he list without controlment or correction? Besides, even this is a benefit; for if that be true, 'Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness,' Ps. cxli. 8, much more this, when that we are chastened, that we may not be condemned, 1 Cor. xi. 32.

*Use* 2. This may serve for comfort when affliction and punishment is befallen one who is his. In such a condition a man is ready to faint, and his heart to fail him for fear, as if God had utterly cast him off; but it riseth from the ignorance of this, that God hath and will afflict his children, and because they have not been experienced under the hand of God. A child, when he is young and tender, not acquainted with his father's threats and corrections, no sooner sees his father lay hand upon rods, but fears he hates him; but a little use under this teacheth him there is indeed love where hatred is in show. And so with them; but they must learn this, that their hearts may rest upon it, as the ark did stay upon the mountain of Ararat after it had floated a long time upon the waters, seeing he afflicts his own, yea, more than the wicked, in this life, and yet still his people.

Israel having forgotten their late miseries and calamities, the sense and feeling of them being worn clean out of memory, they return again to their former corruptions and sins, and are newly threatened with other and more heavy judgments.

*Doct.* If men, many or few, a county or city, one or a company, after they have been delivered or freed from some calamity and judgment, do forget it, passing it over without profit, and returning to their sins and corruptions again, they are in danger of new, and more fearful judgments; for he did this to the green tree, what will he do to the dry? If to the natural olive-tree, what can the wild olive look for? This is manifest by Isaiah, who reproveth the people because they profited not by former judgments, but remained obstinate and in their sins, chap. i. 5, specially vers. 21–23, 'How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; and justice lodged therein; but now they are murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine is mixed with water: thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the widow's cause come before them.' Whereunto he addeth, 'Therefore saith the Lord God of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies,' ver. 24. To this I add Isaiah xii. 9, 17, 21, inferred upon verse 13, manifest by Deut. xxviii. 45, Jer. v. 3, John v. 14. And example of this also the Ninevites may be, comparing together the prophecies of Jonah and Nahum.

*Reason* 1. Because it cannot be equal and right that God should go away and give it over, as overcome by the obstinacy and stubbornness of men. That were as if a prince should give over a rebel, because he were

* Either a misprint, or an obsolete word, which we have not been able to find elsewhere.—ED.

not able to subdue him with a small company, and not gather more forces, it were too much indignity and dishonour. So in this, for God striking for sin, must not lay down his arms till the rebels come in; as Joab gave not over the siege of Abel till Sheba's head was given him, 2 Sam. xx. 22.

*Reason* 2. Because it is dangerous for a people to harden them in their sins; for if 'because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart is fully set to do evil,' Eccles. viii. 11. If the deferring be thus dangerous, what is the removing, and not renewing, or doubling the judgment? It hardens men.

*Reason* 3. Because he must do it, whether his own or not; if his own, that he may cure them. As physicians or chirurgeons double the dose of their medicines, and use more violent means when they find the body hard to work upon, the disease more settled; so the Lord when he finds his own more obstinate. If not his, that he may consume them, and shew his power upon them, that he is able to abase and destroy every one that is obstinate against him.

*Use*. Learn, then, to fear before God, and to profit under his hand, to turn unto him that smites us, and to seek the Lord of hosts, lest otherwise God be provoked to cut off from us head and tail, branch and root, in one day, Isa. ix. 13, 14.

*By the ministry of Malachi*, or *by the hand of Malachi*. The third person is the instrument, and by his hand, that is, by his work and ministry. Some think it is said rather by the hand than the mouth, to shew how uncorruptly he delivered this; and not by the mouth, because the mind and mouth are more apt to corrupt a message than the hand, which carrieth sealed letters. But without opposition, I take it to be the phrase of the Scripture, to note the ministry of him and others, as 1 Sam. xi. 7 and xxviii. 17. The Lord hath done as he hath spoken by my hand. *Malachi* signifies *my messenger*, or *my angel*, whence riseth the error of Origen, as Hieronimus *in hunc locum*, that an angel came, and took the shape of man, and delivered this. But Jerome shews that the nature of a person is not to be taken notice of from the notation or etymology of his name; for then, whereas Hosea signifies a *saviour*, and Joel *the Lord God*, these should not be men, but angels, or the Lord, or the Saviour of the world; which if it follows not, then not this. But whether he was Mordecai, as some think, or Ezra, as most, it is not certain; the conjectures of men for the latter are probable, but easily answered. It is safer to content ourselves with that which is revealed, than rashly or slenderly to affirm anything in so weighty matters, especially when it is not so needful that we should inquire into it; whether he had his name from his birth, or circumcision, or it is a name of office, it is not known. It hath ever been thought a vain curiosity to make inquiry for the messenger's name and title, when the message is most certain, Judges xiii. 18; as here it is, by the testimony of the New Testament. There were in the church three sorts of prophets: some that were to be perpetually in it, and to exercise a perpetual office, to answer men when they inquired of them after the custom of time, and manner; as Samuel, Hosea, Elisha. Some for a time, both for this, and also to stand up in God's person, for some particular thing to foretell it, which being done, they ended their office; as Amos, who prophesied for two years before the earthquake. Thirdly, some, who were only once to prophesy and foretell things, which done, their office ceased; as Jonah to the Ninevites, Obadiah to the Edomites, and of this sort is our prophet.

*Doct*. God, in revealing his will and publishing of his heavenly riches, the mysteries of Christ and his salvation, hath and doth ordinarily use the ministry of man; ordinarily, I say, because at some time he hath used angels to some particular and upon extraordinary occasions, yet never ordinarily and generally in an ordinary established church, but always the ministry of men, which thing is witnessed by the testimony of all times, and all churches, as well in the stories of the Scriptures as other prophets, priests, apostles, ministers. How often that in the Old Testament, 'I rose up early, and sent my prophets;' in the New, as they were men employed under Christ: Eph. iv. 8, 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' 2 Cor. iv. 7; and 'We are ambassadors for Christ,' 2 Cor. v. 20.

*Reason* 1. Because angels' presence would have been fearful, as Luke i. 12, and so unprofitable their ministry, for things would have passed away as they heard it; for fear breeds such a lassitude in the joints, that man lets that go he seemed to hold; so of the mind.

*Reason* 2. To honour the nature of man; for if to be man's, much more God's ambassador [is an honour], he could have done all by an angel; but the human condition had been vilified if he had seemed not to administer his word by men unto men.*

*Reason* 3. Because the message rather than the messengers should be regarded; and if anything be effected, it might be given to the power of God, and not the means. If he had not sent it in earthen vessels, but by some glorious angel, they would have left the thing, and have worshipped the person, Rev. xxii. 8; or if anything had been wrought, they would have attributed it to the power of the means, not to God; but that they should not, he thus disposed, 2 Cor. iv. 7.

*Use*. 1. This ought to be matter of encouragement to the ministers of God, that their labour in preaching and performing the work of their ministry be not tedious unto them, when it is so thankless an office unto man; and the more they labour in it, the less they partake of their double honour, 1 Tim. v. 17; nay,

* Poterant utique per Angelum omnia fieri; sed abjecta esse humana conditio, si per homines hominibus verbum suum administrare nolle videretur.—*Aug. De Doctr. Christiana*, lib. i. *præfat.*

full of contempt; and as Jer. xx. 7, 8, yet they serving the Lord in their ministry, he vouchsafing them that honour, ought to swallow up all these, knowing that we are not to be 'ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God to salvation,' Rom. i. 16; and whosoever shall find it, and receive it by them to believe, beautiful shall their feet be unto them, though others charge them, as Pharaoh did Moses, that they see their face no more. But if none will, yet he will not suffer them to go unrewarded, because he hath set them on work, they are his ministers; as Isa. xlix. 4, 5, 'I said I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought; yet surely my work (or my reward) is with my God. And though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.'

*Use* 2. To teach men not to be offended, or basely to account of the ministry of the word and the mysteries of salvation, because they are brought unto them in such earthen vessels, by so weak means; for it is the work and word of the Lord, howsoever by the ministry of man, weak and base. Was it that he wanted glorious angels that he used not them? He had thousand thousands of them, but for man's infirmity. Was it that he had no power over the kings and nobles of the earth that he employed not them? If he had spoken the word, they could not have resisted. He that had David a prophet, and Solomon a preacher, though not ordinary, could have made them and other princes ordinary preachers and ministers, but their greatness would have obscured his power. Why, then, hath he chosen mean men? That the baseness and mean condition of the person might give place to his glory, that men might not doat on the person, but delight in the ministry and message; therefore, as princes shut up their treasures, not in goodly and sumptuous chests, but in caskets of no price, and of base matter, to deceive the thief, and to convey it whither they would have it, so God these, to lay a stumbling-block to the reprobate; but as many as are called and chosen, to make it the power of God and the wisdom of God to them. There is nothing that so much hardens men's minds as the simplicity of God's works that are seen, and the greatness of the efficacy which is promised, whenas to the godly it is far otherwise.* They are marvellously wrought upon by them, because they look to him who works by them; here is the difference of faith and infidelity, believers and infidels. We wonder because we believe; incredulity wonders but believes not; it wonders at simple things as if they were vain, at great things as if impossible.†

* Nihil adeò est quod obduret mentes hominum, quam simplicitas divinorum operum, quæ in actu videntur, et magnificentia quæ in effectu repromittitur.—*Tertul. De Bapt.* lib. cap. ii.

† Ipsi miramur quia credimus; cæterùm incredulitas miratur, non credit; miratur simplicia quasi vana, magnifica quasi impossibilia.—*Idem.*

*Use* 3. We are the ministers of God, and your servants for Jesus' sake; that we bring to you is the message and commandment of God. Look that ye receive not us, if ye can disjoin us and our message; but that we bring, hear it, believe it, obey it. That we have delivered, that we do and shall deliver as his commandment, his will, look therefore to it that you receive it, for it both you and I must give an account; I for the faithful delivery of it, you for the fruitful receiving of it, both of us for the careful obeying of it. Let no man think much I call so much for hearing and obeying, when there is in the most still performance with the least, and scarce with the least. Tell me, when you lend your money, do you not put your debtor in mind of it when you meet him? So do we, and so must I do; for I fear lest in that day I hear that: Mat. xxv. 26, 'Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, that at my coming I might have received mine own with usury.' I have often put forth God's stock unto you, you must pay usury. *Usura vero est auditæ monitionis per opera exhibitio:* your usury is to witness your profitable hearing by your works. See, then, that you obey and do, that as Nathan said to David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 13, so I may to you, 'Now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.'

*The burden by the ministry of Malachi.* Malachi must carry to this people a burden, not only things acceptable, but displeasing and grievous.

The ministers of God must not only serve him in preaching the gospel and comforts, but also threatenings and judgments.

Ver. 2. *I have loved you, saith the Lord; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob.*

*I have loved you, saith the Lord.* The second part of the chapter is the matter and prophecies, consisting in two parts; one, God's expostulation with the people and priest for their sins, and his judgments against them for those sins. The first is hence to the 9th verse. Their sins are two: ingratitude, contempt of him, and corruption of his worship, the 1st to the 6th verse. Their ingratitude is expressed, that they did not acknowledge nor account of his love, nor yet of his benefits, the fruit of his love, which he had from time to time bestowed upon them, that they might by the greatness of the one, or by the weight of the other, be drawn to perform the duties of piety unto him their God and king, who had deserved so well at their hands and of them. First, for his love.

*I have loved you.* A speech spoken with affection, specially by valuing his love, and disdaining to have it so neglected of those upon whom he had bestowed it. Some think it is a speech imperfect, broken off, and interrupted with grief, when he would have added more. I have loved you; grief not suffering him to

speak more. The supply may be, I have loved you always, but you acknowledge it not, neither answered me with love again, but for this repayed me with sins.

Love given to God, signifies not a passion nor affection, for there is no such thing in God. *Ira Dei non perturbatio animi ejus, sed judicium quo irrogatur pœna peccato.* (August. of the anger of God. *De civitate Dei*, lib. xv. cap. xxv.) So of this; it is no passion, but his free election to bestow, yea, an actual giving to them the adoption of sons and eternal life. For God is said to be angry when he doth that which commonly men do when they are angry, and to love when he doth that which men do when they love. Now this cannot be understood of his general love, of which all are partakers, men and angels, blessing, preserving, sustaining them; for then were it no great matter that he affirms here to his. But of a special love, that is, his choosing of them to be sons, and to bestow on them eternal life. I have loved you; that is, I have chosen you to be my people, and I will be your God; to be my children, and I will be your Father, and to give you the inheritance of sons, than which, what can be greater? Jerome thinks he denies now to love them, because he useth the preter-tense. But it is no rule, whenas the preter-tense doth often include the present, Rom. i. 24, Ps. i. 1.

The first sin reproved is unthankfulness, the reproof being covertly insinuated, rather than openly set down, under the recording and recalling of God's love and the fruits of it, whereof they had been partakers. Jerome observeth here, lest the punishment should seem unjust, and God should without cause afflict them, and lay the burden upon them, he addeth the reproof of their sins. Hence we may observe,

*Doct.* 1. The punishing and afflictions coming to men are caused by their sins: Hosea xiv. 1, 'Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.'

*Doct.* 2. Now to the sin here reproved in particular, which is unthankfulness. Ingratitude and unthankfulness unto God for his love, and the fruits of it, the blessings men receive, either spiritual or temporal, is a very great sin. So the Lord shews it here by his prophet, when he puts it in the foremost of all other sins in this people, and as the principal which makes him threaten this burden unto them. So Isaiah i. 2, sets it before all other sins. It is by the apostle put among the sins of the last days, when iniquity shall get the upper hand, and must abound, 2 Tim. iii. 2. This sin is committed five ways, or there are five kinds or degrees of unthankful men. *First*, when men do not acknowledge God as the author and giver of their benefits and blessings, but find out others, as Hosea ii. 8, 9, 'She knew not that the Lord gave her corn.' *Secondly*, when men do forget him and his benefits, against which David laboured: Ps. ciii. 2, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, forget not all his benefits.' And confessed among sins: Ps. cvi. 7, 'Our fathers remembered not the multitude of thy mercies.' *Thirdly*, when they do not give him praise in word and affection, do not utter it before men. Such were the nine lepers. *Fourthly*, when not only these, but recompense him evil for good; as that, Isa. i. 2, 'I have brought up children, and they have rebelled against me;' Deut. xxxii. 5, 6. *Fifthly*, not faulty in any of these, but do not walk worthy of such mercies, when he doth not render according to the benefit done unto him, as it was said of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

*Reason* 1. Because the contrary is a duty so often commanded, and so earnestly called for in Scripture, even in everything: 1 Thess. v. 18, 'In all things give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus towards you.' Then the other must needs be a sin.

*Reason* 2. Because the saints of God have much laboured against it in themselves and others, which they do not, but [against] that which is evil and sin.

*Reason* 3. Because the contrary is the honouring of God, the crowning of him, and the arraying of him with honour and glory: Ps. l. 23, 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.' Then this is a great dishonour, and then it is evil. That which is against the crown and dignity, specially immediately of a prince, is heinous and grievous.

*Use* 1. This being such a sin thus committed, argues our age guilty before the Almighty, some one way, some after another; yea, who can say, I am free? Many, and the most receive and devour daily the blessings of God, and know not, or acknowledge not that he gave them, but think they come naturally, or by friends, or by their own labour, and so as Hab. i. 16, 'Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their yarn; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous,' and so commit idolatry with their friends, with the earth and heavens, with their labours and hands. But say they be so far instructed that they confess him the giver, yet how some have forgotten him and his benefits; a second brings the oblivion of the first; a third of that, &c. As one nail drives out another, but an affliction makes all to be forgotten; as with men one injury they do us, makes us forget they ever did us good. But say benefits be remembered, and oftentimes spoken of, yet not so much as the afflictions and troubles; or if at one time many words to express the passion in suffering, few in receiving; or if of them, yet as courtiers brag of the king's favour, as Haman, Esther v. 11, 12, more to magnify himself than the king's liberality; for a long story they will tell you of their wealth, and honour, and children, and such like, but a few words, and that very unsavourily, will they drop out of praise to God. They make not their song or psalms of thanksgiving as the faithful have done. But if any can plead not guilty here, and be culpable in none of these, yet his unthankfulness appears that he still remains in his sin, and rebels against the Lord

not only offending him, but by those things he hath received from him; more than any married and modest woman will do to her husband, by the rings, chains, bracelets, apparel, and ornaments he gave her to adorn her, so she might be acceptable to him; not that she should give to an adulterer, to entice him to folly. And yet what else do many, but by their riches and honours, their health and beauty, by their strength and valour, and such like, dishonour him? By their riches they wax proud against God; by their honours and high places they oppress others without fear. Health makes them study the adorning and trimming of the body: by their beauty they entice others, by their valour they contemn others, and like mighty Nimrods they tyrannize in peace and war; so that God for all his cost hath not grapes, but sour grapes, as Isa. v. But say that herein they are not to be charged, yet are they ungrateful, because they have not walked worthy of such benefits, because they have not rendered according to their reward, and every benefit hath not been answered with obedience, and more care to please God.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to labour to see and know himself guilty of this sin, to humble himself for it, and repent of it as of one of the greatest sins he hath, and the greater, as in the degrees he finds himself guilty of it. Now because there neither is, nor can be, true repentance where there is perseverance in it, nor unless it be forsaken, and the former good acted,—for he is ungrateful that is not thankful, as he is wicked that is not just, the contrary evil is ever where the good is not, where and when it ought to be, —therefore must every one labour for the good, and strive to be thankful, to acknowledge, to remember, to praise, to abstain from evil, to reward with all good offices for such great kindness. He must stir up the best instrument that he hath to praise the Lord, whose nature (as one saith) is such, that in conferring of benefits he is most liberal, and most covetous in requiring acknowledgment: *in conferendis beneficiis est liberalissima, ita in gratiarum actionibus reposcendis est avarissima.* This is most acceptable to him, like the scent of all sacrifices, Lev. iii. 16, 17. Let it repent us that we have deprived him of so much as is due to him, and now strive to it, singing the songs of thanksgiving with cheerful hearts when he calls us to it, not loving him otherwise than he hath done us, both in word and deed; ceasing to grieve him, seeking to please him, and to recompense as he hath rewarded us. *Et si gravia præterierunt, tamen gravium memoria ne prætereat; non ut doleamus, sed ut gratias agamus.* (Chrysost. Hom. xii. ad popul. ant.) But (Hom. xxv.), *vera gratiarum relatio hæc est, cum hæc agamus unde Deus glorificari debet, cum ea fugiamus à quibus jam fuimus liberati. Nam, cum Rege contumeliis affecto, cum pœnas luere deberemus, honorati fuissemus, et mox iterum affecissemus contumelia, tanquam ingratitudinis extremæ rei, maximam merito pœnam, et priore multo graviorem dare deberemus.* Whereas, on the contrary, to be truly thankful is a great treasure, it is the way to more riches, because a man doth anew draw at the well of God's bounty; for to him that hath shall be given, if he use it for his Master's glory, and the evil avoided which else would come upon him.

*I have loved thee.* This is understood, not of his general love, but his special, and that after a special manner; not such as he loves whole mankind by, but such as he loves his church by. The love of a whole family, of his spouse and children, is different, one more excellent than another, and so both more special and more excellent.

*Doct.* God, he loves his church with a more special and excellent love than he loves either all creatures or all mankind. So here, Amos iii. 2, Exod. xix. 5, 'Now therefore, if ye will hear my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my chief treasures above all people: though all the earth be mine;' where the learned take the word to signify, a people of a precious treasure. The Septuagint read λαὸς περιούσιος, 'a peculiar people,' Titus ii. 14. Now περιούσιος, *est thesaurus præ aliis electus*, and so it is more excellent, and more dear and precious in God's sight. These were for themselves, and the type of others. Hence is that, 1 Peter ii. 9, 'ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people.' Things elected are more specially loved, hence are those comparisons to set forth this love, that he is the head of his members, the father of his children, the husband of his wife. The members are better affected than excrements, the children than servants, the wife without comparison, as himself, is one flesh.

*Reason* 1. Because love, precious and excellent love, is discerned by the things which proceed from love, that are given and bestowed upon the beloved; for he loves who bestows meat, and drink, and apparel, but he more that provides land, inheritance, and lays up treasure, and gives knowledge and education. The servant is provided for, the child much more, so the things God gives being more excellent, spiritual, salvation, things belonging to it, but to others earthly things only,* 1 Cor ix. 11. There is a threefold state of man, as divines speak of him: *esse, bene esse, optimum esse:* first, *naturæ;* secondly, *gratiæ;* thirdly, *gloriæ.* The first of general love, the two last of special love, which being those God gives his, and his only, then is it with a more special love he loves them.

*Reason* 2. Because it is more constant and perpetual; for the general love of mankind is terminated not with the sun and moon only, but with their breaths; they part with their lives and his love together, but theirs is for ever, and then specially is manifested when life is ended. That in life was but a pledge and earnest of the other, a penny to one hundred pound, or an angel to a thousand pound, a bargain of it.

* Non tam à veris rebus somnia superantur, quàm hæc terrena ab æternis illis absunt.—*Chrysost. de virg.*

*Reason* 3. Because in general love, only *sua dat*, his blessings and outward benefits; but in special, *se dat*, he gives himself, Hosea ii. 19. Now as that of Samuel is true, 1 Sam. xv. 22, obedience is better than sacrifice, because in obedience a man gives himself to God, but in sacrifice he gives but of his, as Cain of the fruit of the ground, Abel of the first of his sheep, and of the fattest of them, so in this.

*Use* 1. This should provoke every one to labour for this love, being so special and so excellent. Rare things are dear and desired; the more rare, the more dear and more desired; but when they are rare and excellent, very precious, then most of all. Such is this love. But how may we get this? Labour to be his, and his children, and church. So we all are. But he is not a Jew that is one outward. But how may we know that we are his, and have love? How do commonly men know they have the general love, and whence is their general brag of it? If they have the fruits of his love, peace, prosperity, riches, &c. So in this, if they have spiritual graces, as true saving knowledge, faith, sanctification, love, meekness, zeal, which are the fruits of his special love: Eccles. ix. 1, 'No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before us.' They are things within us which must manifest that to us; for these then must we labour, that we may know we have it.

*Use* 2. This must teach every one to be more thankful for this than he or others would be for the general. The thankfulness is to answer his love with obedience, to hear and obey: Exod. xix. 5. 'Now therefore if ye will hear my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my chief treasures above all people, though all the earth be mine.' The fruits of the general love of God will require this, and the more fruits the more obedience. He that hath received something, though with the least, owes the most he can do; how much more he that hath more honour, credit, riches, &c., ought to perform more obedience, be more zealous, religious, holy, as August. *surgunt indocti et cœlum rapiunt*, &c. If for these common blessings and love, how much more for the fruits of special love and it? If to whom much, of them much in the former, how much more in this? And of such as have his special love, he looks for obedience and honour, wherein is their thankfulness. The courtier that is advanced above others ought to be more respective of the prince and his will, and with more care and cheerfulness perform all obedience, and the duty of his place than others. He that hath his life, liberty, and living given unto him when all was lost, if he shall not, if he should not respect him, every tongue would be ready to condemn him. But if he should be made heir to the crown, if his issue fail, or he have no child, then more. So in this; and this not being, nothing will more prove that they are not that they would seem to be, and that they have not that they brag on.

*Use* 3. This is matter of comfort to as many as are indeed his, beloved of him. They may be sure they shall lack nothing that is needful and good for them; for if he love them thus specially as his own, God is faithful to provide for his own, for, as Rom. viii. 32, 'Who spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all to death, how shall he not with him give us all things also?' How much more readily will he give us other things, when he hath given us himself, and hath married us to himself? Will a father see his child to want? Will a husband let his wife want when he is rich and able? If they should, yet will not God. Isa. xlix. 15, 'Can a woman forget her child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? though they should forget, yet will I not forget thee.' Therefore they may best have their conversation without care or covetousness; they need not swear or deceive for gain, oppress or offer injury to provide for themselves; they need not profane the Lord's day, nor use unlawful means to lay up for another time to come; for he that doth so specially love them, and hath laid up so great things for them, and given them the pledges of them already, and the earnest of such infinite things, how will not he take care of them to provide necessaries for them? He that in his general love feeds the ravens, the lions, and leopards; makes his rain to fall, and his sun to shine upon the wicked, and fills their bellies with his hid treasures; what will his special love make him to his own? But many of his are oftentimes scanted. So the physician keeps his patient at a strait diet, when full dishes are hurtful unto him. And God oftentimes gives not riches, because when they be *humanæ miseriæ remedia*, the remedies of human misery, they will make them *instrumenta voluptatis aut superbiæ*, the instruments of pleasure or pride, and he knows their hearts better than themselves. But they often want much, and have scarce to satisfy nature, when the wicked have abundance; but their water and brown bread makes them look as well as all the full dishes of the wicked, as it was with Daniel and his fellows. And the prodigal son had little to refresh him, when his father's servants had bread enough, because he abused his former portion, and run from under the protection, and out of his father's house; so with them. At his return he had the fat calf killed for him, and apparel and ornaments given him fit for a son.

*Use* 4. To admonish every one that is his, to look for more correction than others if they provoke him; for more love, more of the rod, more affection, more affliction, the more special love, more special and more speedy correction. This use made Amos of it: chap. iii. 2, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit you for all your iniquities.' Heads of families correct all, and most where they love: children before servants, and of them those they love, if their love be with judgment, and not blinded with affection.

*Wherein hast thou loved us?* Some take this to be a kind of prevention. The prophet knowing what this people would say, thus accused, for themselves, he prevents; ye will ask me wherein I have manifest any love unto you? My answer is ready, and the proof manifest. Was not Jacob brother to Esau? But these are more likely to be the words of the people, for so their ingratitude rather appears that they would not acknowledge the love of God; but some of infirmity, some of malice and contempt spake thus, Wherein hast thou loved us? In what special benefit hast thou shewed thy love unto us? Cyril supposeth that it is likely they remembered the late captivity and calamity God had brought upon them, which did so stick in their minds that all the good God did unto them before and since, specially spiritual, could not make them acknowledge he loved them.

*Doct.* The corrupt nature of man is hardly drawn to confess and acknowledge sin, and himself guilty of sin, but will do anything, accuse God or man, or any other thing, to cover their sin. This people is a manifest proof of it here: and ver. 6, 7, and chap. ii. 14 and iii. 7, 8, Job xxxi. 33, 'If I have hid my sin as Adam, concealing mine iniquity in my bosom,' (*Trem.*) *more hominum*, noting the corruption of man to hide and cover it. It is manifest by Adam's accusing Eve and God, and Eve the serpent, to cover their sin, Gen. iii. 12, 13; Achan, Joshua vii., who covered it till God had found him out. Saul, he covered his by accusing of the people, 1 Sam. xv. 13, 14, 15, 20, 21. David, 2 Sam. xi. 6, &c., yea, even when Nathan came to him, chap. xii., who might, if he did not, take the parable to himself before it was applied by Nathan. The priests, Mat. xxvii. 4 (Gregory), they are like the cuttlefish, that when he perceiveth men go about to take him, doth so dye and colour the water about her with a kind of black moisture, that a man cannot tell where to have her; so these, and so others, either by denying, as Mat. xxv. 44; by defence, as Jonah iv.; by cautelous answer, as Gen. iv. 9; by a good purpose, as Gen. xx. 6; by putting it off to others, Adam to Eve.

*Reason* 1. Because self-love bears rule and sway, which will make him so cover his sins: Job xxxi. 33, 'If I have hid my sin as Adam, concealing mine iniquity in my bosom.' The latter part Tremellius reads, *Abdendo ex dilectione mei iniquitatem meam.* And this is to avoid both punishment from God and shame from men. Naturally they know God is just, and out of his justice will visit the iniquities of men, and they think him as man, and that the proverb is true, 'Confess and be hanged,' supposing he cannot know unless they disclose, Hos. xii. 8. Therefore, to avoid his knowledge, and so his punishment, they willingly smother them. Again, to avoid shame from men, because they will even upbraid them with their sins they have confessed, though haply themselves more wicked, but more covert, 2 Sam. xiii. 13. Therefore they would willingly, and by what means they can, cover them. *Oblectat sanè flagitium, et tamen ipsius rei nomen aures offendit* (*Chrysost. Ser. de virtut. et vit.*).

*Reason* 2. Because he loves his sin, and is very loath to part with it. Now, if he should come to know and acknowledge his sin, he must forsake it, or else men will cry more shame, and God will more sharply punish him; whereas, all the while he dissembles his knowledge he thinks he is the rather to be borne withal, both of God and man.

*Obj.* How should this be accounted a corruption, when, as Isa. iii. 9, they are reproved for declaring their sin and not hiding it?

*Solution.* It is one thing to commit sin openly, and as it were without shame to profess it, another to confess sin with shame to himself and glory to God. *Non confiteri, sed profiteri.* It is one thing for Zimri, Numb. xxv. 6, to manifest sin, and another for David, when he is reproved by Nathan, to confess sin. It is not the same that Absalom commit sin upon the housetop shamelessly in the sight of the sun, to the dishonour of God and his father, and Achan confess that was committed, with shame to himself, and giving glory to God. To declare sin as they did is the height of impiety, but to confess sin as these is the first step to piety; and to cover them gives small hope of recovering them. The one's declaring and the other's cloaking argue both their corruptions.

*Use* 1. Then is the wisdom of the wise but foolishness, who think that the best guide is nature, and that a man shall never err if he follow it. Questionless, it is a marvellous blind guide in all things, and whithersoever it calls we are to be jealous and suspicious of it. It will never lead us to any good, but to false pleasures, deceitful profits, vain honours. It will either teach us that sin is no sin, Rom. vii., or lessen sin, or teach us to cover sin. In the body, and for it, he would be accounted but a slender friend and bad counsellor who should persuade a man wounded that it were nothing, or teach him to cover it till it so fester that the part must be cut off, before he discover it to a chirurgeon. What a guide is nature then?

*Use* 2. To teach every one to see and acknowledge the corruption of his nature, when he finds in himself all willingness and endeavour to cover his sin, whether by accusing God or man, or any other creature; specially when he is reproved by the word of God in the mouth of the minister, then to seek excuses and pretences, argues a marvellous obstinacy and resolution to continue in their sins, besides the hurt they do unto themselves. The hurt is, first, that sin is the greater. He increases his sin who, judging God to be like a man, believes he may escape the punishment of his fault if he committed it not openly, and so if he cover it.* Secondly, he brings more and greater sins

* Plus imo delinquit, qui secundùm Deum cogitans, evadere se pœnam criminis credit, si palam non crimen admisit. —*Cypr. de laps.*

upon himself. As in our bodies the neglect of wounds may cause fevers and putrefactions, and at length death; so in our souls, the hiding of small is to invite greater, for both Satan is emboldened to suggest more, and, their conscience hardened, they easily receive more.* Thirdly, they bring more shame and punishment upon themselves. If the smothering of it here were the burning of it for ever, their policy were not amiss; but when for all this it must come to judgment, their cunning is but cruelty to themselves. What profit is it to a malefactor obstinately to deny his fact to the judge in his private chamber, or before some few, when he hath favour promised him, and be made to confess it at the bar before the whole country, when his own hand and his fellows in the fact shall be brought against him, without all hope of receiving anything but severity of judgment, where every excuse and cover he hath had shall increase both his shame and punishment?

*Use* 3. If this be the corruption of nature, and the sin of this people, let us learn to cast from us the cloaks of shame, and, reproved for our sins and threatened, let us with the people at John's preaching, Mat. iii., confess our sins that we may escape the wrath to come. What else is required of us, than that the church of God hath usually done? as Ezra x. and 1 Sam. vii. 6; what but that wherein we may glorify God, Joshua vii. 19, for in confessing our sins we give him the glory of his justice, as punishing where he was provoked. What, but that we may disburden ourselves, and get a wholesome and sovereign medicine to our wounds? Our wounds have been grievous, as Isa. i. 6. Our sins as the infection have been declared us; our pride, our covetousness, &c., let us not cover them either by impudency or infirmity; let not our proud women say their husbands would have it so, nor the covetous men our wives and children must be maintained so; let not the swearer say he cannot be believed, or utter his wares, or any such cover of state and condition, accusing sometime God, sometime men; for he that threateneth thus the green tree, what will he do to the dry? the natural olive, what will he do to the wild olive? Certainly it shall not be so easy to us as to them; but if all will not, let me speak to as many as fear the word of the Lord. Thou and thy house, thou and thy wife and children, do not hide them, but confess. Remember that, Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that hideth his sins shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.' So common in experience that it is a proverb.

*Wherein hast thou loved us?* This they speak, because of their late captivity, as if for that one cross they were not bound to be thankful unto him for the other mercies; or shewing their blindness and corruption of nature, that for one cross or affliction they acknowledged not, nor account of other mercies.

*Doct.* It is the blindness of man's nature, and his corruption, in an affliction and trouble, not to account and esteem all other the former blessings of God; so in this people. It is manifest not only in the wicked, where corruption is in the strength, but in the good, where it is abated, and yet creeps where it cannot go. In Haman, Esther v. 11–13; in Rebekah, Gen. xxvii. 46; in Jonah, chap. iv. 3, 9; in David, Ps. lxxvii. 7–9; in a multitude of both kinds, Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20.

*Reason* 1. Because men usually live by sight and sense, not by faith, and so they only see and conceive of things present and before them, as beasts do, and do not look to things past.

*Reason* 2. Because the children of God, howsoever they have true faith, yet in most weak, and in best often full of doubts; that when troubles and afflictions come, though they forget not their former blessings, yet make question whether the former were of love or no.

*Use* 1. This teacheth us whence are so many strange practices of the wicked, and passions of God's own, in some troubles and disquietness: the wicked offering violent hands to themselves, hanging, stabbing, drowning themselves, though they be in the midst of many blessings, that a man would think they wanted nothing that heart could think or desire. It is not only from the things themselves, which give no comfort, when there is none within, like clothes that warm none but them who have natural heat; but from the blindness of the mind and their corruption, which cannot account nor rejoice in them, but doth often so transport them and carry them out of themselves, that they know not they have any such comfort to delight in, and for ease of one trouble deprive themselves of all. The godly, upon some loss or other trouble, fall into such passions, as Rebekah and others, their lives irksome and tedious unto them, and find no comforts in all for one discomfort; like children, who, if they have one of their trifles they play withal taken from them, cast away all the rest in great discontent, and can find no pleasure in it; like to men, who, having an hundred acres of ground, if one be gained from them by sea, or wrested from them by title of law, take no pleasure nor joy in all the rest. So they, in the loss of a child, take no pleasure, at least in their passion, nor account not of many other of God's blessings, which many of God's, as dear to him as they, have not, or not in that abundance. All this is from the corruption of their nature.

*Use* 2. If this be the corruption of nature, and the sin of this people, let us see ourselves in them, and examine ourselves. We shall easily find this in ourselves, being all of one metal. Let us learn to mourn for it, and hereafter to strive against it, esteeming and accounting of the blessings we have, or

* Ut in corporibus qui vulnera neglexerunt, febres gignunt et putrefactiones, et mortem denique, itidem et in animis, qui pusilla dissimulant, majora invitant.—*Chrysost. ad Gal.* cap. i.

tasted in former times, though God have given us wormwood and gall. If any blessing be taken from us, or trouble come upon us, let us be thankful unto God, and comfortable in the midst of other of his blessings; and if we be discontented, let it be with ourselves; if we grieve, let it be at our sins for abusing such blessings, or walking unworthy of them, and therefore hath God taken them from us. In them let us stay ourselves, as Job stopped his wife's mouth, Job ii. 10, when she moved him to discontent and discomfort; and, in the mean time, let us labour for good consciences and sound spirits, the feeling of God's favour and assurance of his love; so shall we bear all our infirmities, Prov. xviii. 14, and grief or losses to him shall be but as so many sparks falling into the ocean. (*Chrysost. de vita recta*, Hom. 25. *ad popul. Ant.* 12. i. d. 2.)

*Was not Esau Jacob's brother?* Here is God's answer to their murmuring question, and, as it were, a plain denial of his love, proving evidently to them that he loved them. Now he reasoneth not from common benefits, as that he had created them, that he preserveth them, that he gave them health and peace, prosperity and comforts, having brought them from their captivity, and seated them in their own land, &c., but demonstrated his love unto them from the beginning of their nation, from their head and author. You, as ungrateful creatures, will not acknowledge my love: this is your impudency; but see, I will make you confess it. And, first of all, to fetch things from the very beginning, 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' And so, as if all things be considered, no cause why I should love one more than other; they were both begotten of one father, both born in one womb, both successors of the covenant, both boughs of one root, both digged out of one rock; yea, if any privilege and cause of love, it was in Esau, because he was the first begotten; yet I loved and freely chose Jacob, yea, before he was born, and hated Esau. But some will say, what is this to this people? Much every way; because these were two nations, that is, the heads of them; so that what God did to them, he did to their posterity. Then it follows to be reckoned as a benefit to them, and so proves his love, when he had chosen them, and rejected their brethren, without any desert of theirs. Then was their ingratitude so much the greater, and worthy the reproving.

*Was not Esau Jacob's brother? yet I loved Jacob.* They were in many things equal, and in none Jacob before, but Esau; yet here is a close preferring of Jacob as chief man in the family, and notable as by somewhat in himself to overmatch his birthright, and make him more acceptable, and more allowed of God, which is his piety. The like is Gen. v. 32. Shem is put first, though not the eldest of the three; for this, because he was greatest in God's books for his piety. In our common speech we so speak, when we shew our account of one, such an one, such an earl's or lord's brother; here, though we speak of the brother, we imply a greater dignity in the earl: so was not Esau Jacob's brother? Here Jacob is preferred.

*Doct.* They who are in privileges of the flesh and worldly respects inferior by much to others, are in the account of God not less, but greater, and more honourable, if they have piety with other virtues and spiritual graces, which others are contemners of.

In the prophecy of Isaiah the Lord comforts his holy church, and tells her she is precious in his sight, and honourable, and that he loves her, Isa. xliii. 4. This people, the posterity of Jacob, were but a neglected people in respect of other nations; the Lord found them in a desert land, in a waste howling wilderness, not allured to become their tutelar God by their greatness, or the richness of their country; yet he led them about, he instructed them, he kept them as the apple of his eye, Deut. xxxii. 10. The godly are many times as 'stones disallowed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,' as Christ also himself, the corner stone, was, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

*Reason.* Because God sees not as man sees. He loves most that in men whereby they are likest to himself; that is, their holiness and piety, and other virtues, which are above other privileges of the flesh. Men judge by the outward condition, as the barbarians did, Acts xxviii., and as Zophar did, Job xi. But so doth not God; he sees what is in the heart, and what doth truly deserve.

*Use* 1. Then let not men carry themselves high upon the privileges of the flesh, as Esau is no whit better for being the elder brother. Ishmael was elder, yet Isaac was accepted. One nation may be more noble and honourable than another, yet God respects not that; but 'in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him,' Acts x. 35. Nabal may be richer, Ahithophel wiser, Absalom fairer, Tertullus or Herod more eloquent than many of God's people, yet less in God's esteem. It is a greater honour to be the sons of God, than the heirs of monarchs, and so Moses counted it. He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, Heb. xi. 24, 25; and hence it is, that when the very disciples of Christ began to grow proud, that they could subdue devils, &c., he corrects them, and tells them there was another thing wherein they were rather to rejoice, Luke x. 18, 19.

*Use* 2. Let us learn to imitate God, to prefer such as are godly in our esteem. This is made one note of a man that shall come at last to God's holy mountain, that 'in his eyes a vile (that is, a wicked) person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord,' Ps. xv. 4. This is to be like unto God, who respected Mary, though she were poor and mean: 'Thou hast regarded the low estate of thine handmaid,' Luke i. 48. And this St James teacheth us, that it is not agreeable to the Christian profession to

have the faith of Christ in respect with persons, to prefer a man because he hath a gold ring and goodly apparel; but, saith he, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith.' James ii. 2, 5.

Ver. 3. *And I hated Esau, and made his mountains waste, and his heritage a wilderness for dragons.*

*And I hated Esau, and made his mountains waste.* Some think that this is only added to prove his hatred to Esau, viz., you may easily see my hatred, whenas that famous mountain Seir, where there were so many dukes, as Gen. xxxvi. 15, *ad finem*, is now without any dweller, and all the cities and habitations of them are destroyed. Which thing, as it is true, and we doubt not in part the meaning of this place, yet not the whole, because the Lord aims not so much to set out his hatred to Esau and his posterity, as his love to Jacob and his; therefore there must needs be somewhat more in it, that is, the dissimilitude or dislike effect, to shew his love to them, which riseth thus: Those whom I love, I keep them in their country, and suffer them not to be led captive; yet, if for correction, I suffer the enemy so far to prevail, I do again reduce them into their own country, and give them their own land, and the comforts of it. On the contrary, those whom I hate, those for their sins I cast into banishment, and never bring home again; but let their land to be a dwelling for beasts, dragons, and such like. Now the former I have done to you who are Jacob's posterity, and the latter to Esau's. Now contrary effects have contrary causes. So, then, as they may see in them my hatred, so in yourselves ye may apprehend my love, who are now at home in your own land and country, and enjoy your comforts in your country. This, then, apparently shews his hatred to Esau's posterity, as in spiritual things, the apostle being interpreter, Rom. ix.; so here, in temporal things, and closely and by comparison his love to Jacob's seed, and to this people. The first only to the children of promise, but this to all, even the whole seed, and not they only which were blessed in Isaac.

*Doct.* Exile and banishment, when it falls to a man or multitude, to a family or a whole nation, it is a sign and a proof of the wrath and displeasure, of the anger and hatred of God. So is it here made and proved, because God threateneth by his prophet usually that which men threaten and menace when they are angry, that proves their anger when it is effected: Deut. xxviii. 41, 64, 68, 'Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee. Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.' Going into captivity, scattering and serving the enemy, are threatened as tokens of wrath, Micah i. 15, and ii. 4, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17.

*Reason* 1. Because it is a judgment of God upon whomsoever; now the judgment of God shews his wrath and displeasure.

*Reason* 2. Because it is a blessing, and so a token of the favour of God, to have houses or lands, and so to enjoy them.

*Obj.* Many are banished and cast into exile for Christ and the profession of his truth. *Ergo*, &c.

*Sol.* It is true that as among the Grecians they had an *ostracismus*, a law to banish every one that excelled other in riches, or in honour, or favour, or eloquence, and wisdom, yea, in their outward justice; as Aristides was banished Athens by the voices of all, even a rustic who knew him not by face, but because they called him just; so falls it out in the world, and in the kingdoms of it, that they do expel those who profess Christ and piety; but that is nothing against this. First, for that which Justin Martyr saith (Epist. ad Diognetum de Christianis), *omnis peregrina regio, patria est eorum, et omnis patria est peregrina;* every foreign country is their home, and at home they are strangers, and so they not banished wheresoever. Again, because this comes only from the malice and displeasure of men, and is a favour of God, that they are enabled to part with all for his sake, as Acts v. 41, so we may rejoice if we be counted worthy to be exiles for his name; but this here spoken of comes both from the wrath and displeasure of God and man. Further, as *causa, non pœna*, the cause, not the punishment, makes a martyr, so Salvian speaketh of a double captivity, or of two sorts of captives, one who are *extrinsecus carne*, captives outwardly in the body, others *intus mente captivi*, inwardly in their minds; and affirmeth, of two great evils, I suppose it is more easy for a Christian to sustain the captivity of his body than the bondage of the soul.* Now they which are captives in body for this, are freed in their minds; and, *è contra*, they who hold them captive are most captive, for they are in their minds so, as 2 Pet. ii. 19.

*Use* 1. This may teach all such as may fall into captivity and exile, that when it betides them, they should learn to groan under it as under the manifest sign, yea, and the thing that is the wrath of God; for if they may and ought to apprehend God's displeasure when their land brings not forth abundance to them and their use, what when it bears not them any longer?† But this lesson you may teach those that

* Ex duobus lethalibus malis levius, ut reor, est captivitatem corporis Christiani, quàm captivitatem animæ sustinere.—*Salvian.*

† If any should not, we may then use the words of Sal-

are in captivity, we neither are, neither are we in fear of it. I answer, that men careful of themselves will learn and regard medicines or prescriptions before they have need of them, especially if there be any likelihood they may fall into a disease, lest the remedy not ready, the danger may be and prove the greater; and the knowledge of anything is no burden. So in this. But have we no fear of this, that we have no need to learn it? What, then, meant this late and most horrible treason or practice, that every nation, Christian or barbarous, whether Turks, Tartars, or whosoever heard of? If our papists, the greatest enemies of Christ this day the world hath; if our pseudo-Catholics, the most despiteful enemies to the king and his posterity, to the state and the prosperity of it, to the church and the peace of it, had prevailed in their designs, what would have been our condition but this? Questionless, either must it have come to cutting of throats and the spilling of our blood, after which the scarlet whore and her whorish brood hath a long time thirsted, or else this captivity and exile; if not carried out of our own land, yet made slaves in our own land; for they that had remained should have served a stranger in their own land, Deut. xxviii. 49, 51, 52, 66, 67, for whereto else tended this but to bring in a foreign power, to the slaughter of most and slavery of the rest?

*Use* 2. Then is it a special favour to be acknowledged, and God to be with all thankful minds glorified of all those who find that they are kept in their own land, not unthankfully, as this people said, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' when they had this benefit; but herein hast thou loved us, that we are not carried or taken captive, that our cities and towns are not laid waste. It is for us in respect of many other deliverances and preservations from dangerous attempts; so of this last not the least, but that which is everyways the greatest; for if it was the horriblest and most fearful treason that ever was plotted, if the danger of overturning the church and state the greatest, if the confusion to us and ours the most fearful, if the greatest sign of God's wrath and displeasure, if they had prevailed not only to lay the parliament house waste, when they cried, 'Raze it, raze it even to the ground,' but to overthrow both church and commonwealth, when their condition that had been blown up with the house, and then perished, had been better than ours who were out of it; when our men were appointed for the swords and slaughter, our wives and daughters for rapes and adulteries, and after to the sword; our children to have been dashed in pieces against the stones of our streets, our cities to have been set on fire over our heads, and all our wealth to have been a prey for desperate and forlorn wretches: then that God hath delivered us from all this, it must needs be a token, yea, the greatest, of his favour and love. He that seeth it not is blind; he that seeth it, and doth not acknowledge it, is unthankful; he that sees and acknowledgeth it, and doth not praise and magnify God for it, is very wicked and impious. If it had been the preserving of goods alone from the spoil, if our cities alone from burning, if our children only from perishing, if our wives only from rapes and uncleanness, if our lives alone from death, and our souls from the grave, the least of these, and any one of them, had been a special favour and sign of his love; what when not one of these, but all? The preservation of them continually, and every day, when there is none that hunts so after them, and seeks extraordinarily by malice to take them away, is a favour and a sign of his love. More, when they had laid their counsels thus deep, and sought it so dangerously, if he had revealed it half a year since in the beginning of the plot, it had been a token of his good-will; but when it was come to such ripeness, and as there was but a step betwixt David and death, so not a night betwixt us and confusion, it was much more. Therefore, to set forth his love, he brought us within the sight and smelling of the danger, that we might the more account of it. Our cities not wasted as Edom's mountains is a token of his favour.

*His mountains waste.* Mountains are for strength, for the defence and preservation of anything, and by them is signified the greatness of Edom, and all his power and strength; and *metaphoricè*, the great and mighty men, as Micah i. 4.

*Doct.* No outward thing can privilege a man from God's judgments, or be a sanctuary to save any from his wrath and displeasure, when he will punish and execute his wrath.

*And his heritage a wilderness for dragons.* Mount Seir it was Esau's inheritage and his posterity, not only left then of his father, but given him of the Lord, Josh. xxiv. 4. Notwithstanding, when they had defiled this with their sins, as followeth in the next verse, the Lord cast them out, and made it cast them out, that it was no longer inhabited by them, but possessed by dragons.

*Doct.* They who defile their land and inheritage by sin and wickedness shall be cast out of it, and it shall spue them out. *Vide* Micah ii. 10.

Ver. 4. *Though Edom say, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; yet saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will destroy it; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people with whom the Lord is angry for ever.*

*Though Edom say.* To evict this people more manifestly of ingratitude, he proceeds to other benefits he had bestowed on them as fruits of his love,

vian: An credimus forte quod captivus animo populus ille non fuerit, qui lætus tunc in suorum captivitatibus fuit? Captivus corde et sensu non erat, qui inter suorum supplicia ridebat? Qui jugulari se in suorum jugulis non intelligebat? Qui mori se in suorum mortibus non putabat?

and so proving that he loved them. And this was but by comparison set down, insinuated under the contrary, and in the amplification of the signs of his hatred to Esau and Edom; for this here spoken was not for them, but for his own people.* So here; for when the contrary was to them, if this were hatred, that must be love; for them, then, and their use, are these things written. And the force of it stands thus: See, it is my hatred to Esau and his posterity that they are not established in their own land, nor defended there in their coasts, but destroyed and cast out, and justly, for their sins, of which you are eyewitnesses, that in them and their ruin I have magnified myself and my name. Then must it needs be love unto you, that having brought you from your captivity, I have confirmed you in your land, and defended it and you.

*Though Edom say.* The first part is the anticipation or preventing of them, setting down under their person the swelling and proud words and speeches they would speak and utter; that is, I have said, I will lay her mountains and cities waste; but they, in the pride of their own hearts, and confidence of themselves and their own strength, as if they were able to resist me, and to strive and stand against my power, utter such vain hopes and bragging thoughts of their own; yet shall all be but in vain. Thus they say, 'We are impoverished.' The Idumeans being expelled their country, carried into captivity for their sins, and wandering in another and strange country, are not for all that humbled for their sins, nor seek not unto me; but in their impoverishment and banishment they thus say, For all this we will return and be built; we by our own strength and power, in spite of who saith nay, will come home again to our country, shake off the yoke of our enemies, and will build and establish Idumea again, and all our cities.

*Doct.* The Lord he takes notice of, seeth, and beholdeth all men's carriage in the way of his judgments, how they profit by them or grow perverse, how they hold out against him, or humble themselves in them, manifested as here, so Isa. i. 5, and xxx. 1, 2, and xxxviii. 5; Jer. v. 3, and xxxi. 18; Jonah iii. 10.

*Reason* 1. Because he might know to lessen or increase them, how to remove them or renew them. As the gold-finers, when they have put their metal into the furnace, look ever and anon how it purifies, or how the dross cleaves to it, they may put out, or put further in, add more coals, or blow more vehemently. So in this, affliction is the furnace.

*Reason* 2. Because he hath tied himself unto this by his word and promise, to hear and regard their prayers and repentance, when his judgments or chastisements drive them to see and acknowledge their sins: 2 Chron. vii. 14, 15, 'If my people, which are called by my name, humble themselves, and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, and seek my face; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and my ears attent to the prayer that is made in this place.'

*Use* 1. For the time past, the time of our late judgment of the plague (if it may be counted late, which is yet upon us), the Lord hath taken notice of every man's profiting or not profiting by it; either how he was humbled, or how he still held out; whether as Ephraim, whether he lamented his sins, and turned to God, or as Edom he held out, and promised to himself the repairing of any loss whatsoever: of his wealth, by following his trade more closely; of his wife, that he may have another, and money with her; of his children, he is young, he may either have more, or he is eased of the care and charges of them. Howsoever every man's carriage and fruit hath been, the Lord hath seen it, which is matter of comfort to as many as have been truly humbled; the Lord hath seen their hearts, heard their prayers, accepted their repentance, the fruit whereof they now enjoy, that they live to praise God, Isa. xxxviii. 19. But it is matter of terror to as many as either condemned this duty in others, making the public humiliation a means or cause of increasing the plague, or neglecting it in themselves, or performed it only in subtilty, making a show of that they had not; seeming to be truly humbled, and willing to forsake their sins, when it was but in cunning to get his hand removed, which seemeth to have been the state of most; which, howsoever, it was not so well discerned then, yet it hath appeared since even to every man. For the benefit of the winter is chiefly seen when winter is gone, for the springing plants, and the trees clothed with leaves and fruit, tell us by their pleasant show how they gained by winter.* And if men, then God much more. Be not then deceived, God is not mocked. And as his taking knowledge of the humiliation of the good be to reward them, what of your deceits but to recompense? Though Pharoah deceived often, and his own person escaped, yet the Lord paid him home at last in the Red Sea.

*Use* 2. For the present time, or that is to come in every judgment and affliction, whether poverty, banishment, reproach, disgrace, disease, or any other thing, the Lord he takes notice how thou art affected in them; whether thou art patient, or murmuring; whether thou art comfortable, or heartless; whether using lawful means or unlawful; whether trusting in them, or relying upon him. Then see thou be the same in secret, or when thou are turned to the wall, as when thy minister or thy well affected friends are

* Quicquid in scriptura dicitur de hominibus malis, ad hoc dicitur, ut civitas Dei ex comparatione contrariâ vel proficiat vel emineat —*Aug. De civitat. Dei.* lib. xvi, cap. ii.

* Hyemis lucrum tunc maximè demonstratur cum illa præteriret; namque vernantes segetes et foliis ac fructu affluentes arbores per ipsum aspectum clamant, utilitatem sibi ex hyeme factam, *Chrysostom ad Pop. Ant. Hom.* 18.

with thee; not as many, who have good words, shew great patience before some men, either that the minister might praise them at their burials, or others might commend them after they were gone from them. But think when they are gone, the Lord stands by thy bedside, or is in thy secret closet, yea, in the secrets of thy heart, and takes notice of all things at all times.

*Doct.* Wicked men, the posterity of Esau, when they are down and decayed, impoverished, or any way afflicted, think to repair themselves, to overcome the judgment, and recover themselves of themselves, and by means they like of, and pleaseth their humour, without seeking the Lord; manifested by these Edomites, also by the Ephraimites, the most of them, and the worst, Isa. ix. 9, who 'said in their pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones.'

*Reason* 1. Because they see these means to prosper oftentimes, by the indulgence or rather the anger of God, which if they be cross at any times, they impute but to want of craft and power.*

*Reason* 2. Because they are ignorant of God, the author of their trouble, and impute it to fortune or other second causes, which they doubt not, but of themselves, and by such means to fortify themselves against, and to repair and recover that they have lost.

*Reason* 3. Because they are no ways well persuaded of God, neither his power, nor his will; but as they are privy unto themselves they have contemned him, so in the height of reason, they see it is just he should contemn them.

*Use* 1. This being so, consider if we have not many wicked men, many Edomites, who are desirous and do practise to raise up themselves without the Lord by unlawful means, and never humble themselves to him; and if formally they do this, yet trust more to these. Amongst these the chief are our papists, who having their mountains and monasteries laid waste, their habitations made a wilderness for dragons, and being impoverished by the just judgment of God upon them for their idolatry and mystical enmity against Christ, by the hand of King Henry VIII. in policy, and of Queen Elizabeth of blessed memory, in piety and policy, they resisting of God, as if they were stronger than he, have assayed as heretofore, so of late to renew and re-edify their desolations. But by what means? Not *precibus et lachrymis*, the weapons of the church, but by fire and sword, by fraud and cruelty, seeking to build again their desolate places, and to lay the foundation of them in the blood of the king and his seed, the peers and prelacy, the gentry and commons of the land, all which is without God; for he will build his church *sanguine martyrum*, by the blood of martyrs shed by others, not by the blood shed by these who account themselves martyrs. And though some deny that they are not all such, and that it is against charity to think so of them, because they seem now to condemn this more than barbarous enterprise, I think (as every man abounds in his own sense) I should do them no wrong; nay, if every learned papist, if he were in place where he durst speak it, would think I should do him wrong if I should judge him disliking this, which is so meritorious and commendable by their doctrine and practice; for if for one and the king, to lay their hands upon the Lord's anointed, why not for the rest? And for others of them, though a little human pity makes them a while to abhor them, yet the schooling of a Jesuit or priest will easily and in short time harden; and I doubt not but he that seems now most pitiful would have been an Edomite, as Obadiah shews them what they were by telling them what they should not have been, vers. 11–14. But to leave these, we have others who imitate the Edomites, would raise up themselves by themselves and evil means, not seeking to the Lord. He that is in disgrace seeks to rise by undermining of others, and by flattery and fraud to make himself great again. In sickness, to expect his health by unlawful means, or unlawfully using them, seldom or not at all seeking the Lord. In poverty and decay, by lying, and swearing, and deceiving, and breaking, which once done, is better than many years' trading.

*Yet saith the Lord of hosts.* Here is the second part, God's threatening against their swelling brags, vowing as it were to disappoint all their counsel and endeavour. And to the end that they may be assured it shall be so, the Lord sets himself down with such an adjoint as may assure them he is able to do what he saith he will; for he that speaks this is the Lord of hosts, such and so great and mighty, that he commands all creatures to help and hurt whom and when he pleaseth, to save and to destroy, to further and hinder. As the general commands all the army and all the bands, so he all creatures.

*Doct.* The Lord our God is the Lord of hosts, he that is able to command all creatures for the saving of his, or the destroying of others the wicked, to help where he will, or to punish whom he will and when he will. He is here called the Lord of hosts, applied to this; hence it is that this title is given unto him in infinite places, sometimes for good, and sometimes for evil, 2 Kings xix. 35, 1 Chron. ii. 9, Isa. i. 24, and ii. 12. This is manifest by his manifold commanding of creatures both for good and evil, both to save and to destroy. Angels are his ministers, Ps. civ. 4; they are sent by him, Ps. lxxviii. 49, Isa. xxxvii. 36; he commands the sun, Josh. x. 12, 13; the sea, Exod. xiv. 21; the winds, Matt. viii. 26; the fire, Dan. iii.; the lions, Dan. vi.

*Reason* 1. Because he is the Creator of all creatures, and such a one as still sustains and upholds them in

* Quando nihil est infælicius fælicitate peccantium, qua pœnalis nutritur impuritas, et mala voluntas velut hostis interior roboratur.—*Aug. Epist. ad Marcell.*

being, not as a shipwright, he makes, another maintains; no marvel if he can command what he will.

*Reason* 2. Because of his omnipotent power, his wise providence to guide and govern them, to twine and turn them whithersoever he will. If he have given it to weak man in his skill, and with his weakness to guide a ship, and turn other creatures, how much more himself?

*Use* 1. This may teach every man, when he finds any of the host of God against him, any creature to work for his hurt, to affront him in body, and goods, and name, or howsoever, to say as 2 Sam. xvi. 10, 'Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David: who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?' So bid him curse, not as sin, but as a punishment, or judgment, or chastisement; for he cannot be author, but *ordinator peccati*, one who doth dispose of their sin and evil to the end not they, but himself aims at. The malice is Shimei's, the Lord he disposeth to afflict David to humble him; so in every particular thing, thy meat and drink, the air, fire, water, beasts, any creature, man, great or small, if they hurt, say it is the Lord who bid them; complain to him of it, seek to him for redress of it, humble thyself, and by the mediator seek reconcilement. They who are annoyed by a band of men, or the wing of a battle, will seek redress from their captain or general. So here, as Acts xii. 20, 'Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon, but they came unto him with one accord, and having made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend, they desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country:' so seek to God on whom you depend. Otherwise, if Absalom will stand out, when Joab and the rest of the host is sent against him, he must looked to be pierced with darts.

*Use* 2. To teach every man who would have the host of God to be for him, and with him, to pray unto God, the Lord of hosts, who can dispose of them, who hath them all at command, who can take from them their malice and malignity; or as a wise physician, make a wholesome medicine of that which is poison, for he hath far more absolute command of them, than any general over his soldiers, as the centurion insinuates, Luke vii. 7, 8. Hence did Jacob, when he feared Esau and his band, pray, Gen. xxxii. 9, and found the fruit of it, chap. xxxiii. 4. Hence in the Gospel, they sought from him the ejection and dispossession of devils, of what number and quality soever, the curing of diseases, the rebuking of winds and sea, the conversion or restraining of enemies, for he was the Lord of hosts; so must we still, for he is the Lord of hosts. Means we must use: as for defence, weapons; for health, physic; as the Jews used the disciples.* But he must be looked unto on both sides, because he is the Lord of hosts; for that any can help, that is not from themselves, but from him.

* Qu. 'as the Jews used, and the disciples'?—ED.

*Use* 3. If any would be free from their hurt, and have their help, let him seek to be at peace with God, and to have him his friend; for to whomsoever he is a friend, they will all be friendly. When there was peace betwixt the two kings of Israel and Judah, Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, each people with horses served other; when it was, 'I am as thou art,' then it followed, 'my people as thy people, and mine horses and thine horses,' 2 Kings iii. 7. So here: Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please God, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' Many men would have all the hosts of God, for him an his friends, but seeks not the favour of his love, as if these being more than naturally his, could love where he hated, or where he is hated. But he that would have all things serviceable, must seek his favour, and to be at one with him; then, Rom. viii. 28, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' But who have more enemies than these? They make themselves as a prey, all hate them. *Ans.* When their love and favour shall be better to them than their hatred, they favour them, and shall do so; but when their hatred is good for them, they profit by it, are exercised and purged, and made fitter for heaven. The Lord is the Lord of hosts, who thus can make it work.

*They shall build, but I will destroy.* He threatens to overthrow them, and all the means they have to establish themselves, that though they prosper a little by his connivance, and [he] suffer them, yet they should fail of their hope, for he would destroy all they had done.

*Doct.* All the hopes and endeavours of the wicked shall be frustrated and vain, so that that which they hoped to establish themselves by, shall be their ruin. God will destroy it, and after them by it, so here, and Ps. cxii. 10, 'The wicked shall melt away, his desire shall perish,' all their studies, counsels, desires, endeavours. This hath usually fallen out, as Hosea x. 6, 'Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.'

*Use.* 1. No marvel, then, if we see every day wicked men disappointed of their hopes, when they think by any unlawful means to build up or edify themselves, their names, houses, or posterity. They may haply build a while and prevail, as Babel, but it will be their ruin; nay, it hath been to many of them. By usury and oppression they have got lands and livings: they have left them to their babes; they have builded houses, and called them by their names; but in a few successions how they are destroyed and come to others, how they hold not herein to the third heir, how they have been their destruction, who sees not? So for ambition: many, seeking to rise like Haman, accusing, despising, and maligning the people of God, have had like ends and destruction. Above all we may remember, as others, so this last enterprise of the papists, with joyful remembrance,—I pray God with as thank-

ful hearts and lives,—how God hath disappointed the hope of our wicked, perjured, and perfidious Catholics and Papists, who had thought to have built up themselves, and to have re-established all their idolatrous estates, by their bloody and cruel, barbarous and savage attempt; yet that they built God hath, and none else, destroyed, and we doubt not but it will be to their greater ruin among us; for howsoever the state hath used too much mildness towards them, yet they will no doubt, upon this, lay to their hand and draw forth the sword.

*Use* 2. To admonish a state, as ours, that it will be in vain for them to imagine to establish themselves without the Lord, by using unlawful means and policy, for God will destroy them. The danger hath been lively before our eyes, upon that connivance of ours, and little strength they had gotten. What if they should be suffered to grow with us? Is not that which Pharaoh feared of Israel (Exod. i. 10, 'Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land'), more justly to be feared of these, for they never held it lawful to take away lives of princes, to take up arms against them, to depose them because they were idolatrous, and rejected of God? But these do, as Simanca in his Institutions, Tit. xxiii. sect. ii. and xiii.; and Dominicus Bannes in 22 Sum. Tho. quæst. xii. art. ii., that subjects are bound to deny obedience to such sovereigns, and to take up arms against them, if they have power to do it; for by heresy he is deprived of all dominion; and he expresseth himself what is meant if they have power, because, saith he, with great detriment, with the danger of life and loss of goods, they are not bound to take arms against them, or to exempt themselves from obedience, if they be not in danger of a mortal sin, that is, of falling from the catholic faith; and therefore it follows that the faithful of England and Saxony are to be excused, who do not exempt themselves from the power of their princes, neither take up arms against them, because they have not power to make their wars against their princes, and they are incident to great perils if they stir. By which it is apparent that they wait but till they have strength, if their secret plots be thus frustrated; so that he which will speak for favour to be shewed towards them, he is either ignorant of this, or else he is a secret enemy to the state, in plain reason, besides the judgments of God, who will overthrow when men think thus to build.

*But I will destroy it.* The Lord takes this to himself, to overturn all their buildings, and destroy their strength and their kingdom.

*Doct.* It is the Lord that, as he plants, so pulls up kingdoms, nations, and men, that casts out and brings in, that sets up and pulls down, that makes and destroys states, public or private, at his pleasure. They are all in his hand, and done by him, and fall not out by any fortune, or by an ordinary revolution and vicissitude of things, or yet from men, though they be the means. But this evil is of the Lord, as here; so Micah ii. 4, Jer. xviii. 6, 7, 'O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord: Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.' Dan. ii. 21, 'He changeth the times and seasons; he removeth kings and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.' Luke i. 52, 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.'

*Reason* 1. Because he is absolute Lord over all. All the kingdoms of the earth are not Satan's, as he falsely affirmed, Mat. iv., but the Lord's: Ps. xxiv. 1, 'The earth is the Lord's;' yea, 1 Sam. ii. 8, 'The pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.'

*Reason* 2. Because the smallest things are not without, but by his power and providence: the falling of a sparrow, the putting down of one man's estate, and from his estate, Ps. lxxv. 6, 7. In all these a certain divine disposition orders, divine power sustains, divine sentence judges. *In omnibus quædam dispositio divina ordinat, quædam potentia divina sustinet, quædam sententia divina judicat.*

*Reason* 3. Because it happens unto them, then only when they have defiled the land, and defied the Lord, and as it were set up sin and Satan against his will and word;—

*Use* 1. This may teach us, when we see kingdoms overturned, and wars raised, whereto to impute it, what to make the cause of it; *vide* Micah i. 15, 'I will bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah.'

*Use* 2. If our bloody Romanists had prevailed in their barbarous and cruel plot to the supplanting and overthrow of our kingdom, church, the burning of our cities, the razing of our towns, the sacking of our houses, and our utter ruin, we ought to have looked unto the Lord, who destroys and pulls up, and they but only the instruments of his wrath.

*Obj.* Then you justify their act and intent, if it were the will of God, and they but his instruments for it.

*Ans.* I justify them as much as Luke did Judas, and Herod, and Pilate, the rulers and the Jews; because in the crucifying of Christ they did the secret counsel of God, Acts iv. 28, who were condemned to hell for resisting his revealed will, and committing murder, and so must these without speedy repentance; besides, God's and their ends were indifferent.* God had done it to purge the land of us, and of our sins, and that in just justice (they of malice), and for our principal good, the profession of piety and the gospel, and the hatred of their more than heathenish idolatry.

* Qu. 'different'?—ED.

*Use* 3. To teach us, if we would not be destroyed and rooted out, if we would be established and confirmed, in despite of all papists and atheists, to seek to have the Lord on our side. If he be on our side, who can be against us? Or if they side against us, they shall not prevail to destroy us; for if he only destroy, then no other can. Then, though they provide their great armies, though they have their secret plots, though they strow our ways with gunpowder, yet iniquity shall be upon the wicked, and we shall escape; and as we have, so shall we still have occasion to praise God, singing Ps. cxxiv. and cxxix. For he only destroys and saves. When he will save, nothing can destroy, *et è contrà*, men and munition, wise counsellors, grave senators, valorous captains, resolute soldiers, are some help and means. It may be good to have peace with other nations and kingdoms about them; but to establish a state, to keep it from falling, nothing can be sure; but to have peace, and be at one with God, that we may have him our protector, then shall we not only not fall and perish, but be without fear. What need he fear the world, who hath God to be his guardian? *Quis ei de seculo metus est, cui in seculo Deus tutor est.**

*And they shall call them.* The second thing that God threatens is shame to their destruction, reproach, and disgrace from other nations and people, scorn, and contempt, expressing how great their misery should be, whenas for it they should become a by-word to other people and nations. They shall call them, that is, other nations that live about them, or pass by them, or hear of them, shall take, as it were, this parable against them, and say, This mountain of sin is a border of wickedness, a region whom God hath cursed for their sins, and laid waste for their iniquity. This destruction is not come unto them by chance, or natural and human revolutions and courses of things; but for their wickedness, and impious manners, hath God cursed and destroyed them for ever.

*Doct.* God makes men odious and contemptible among men, a parable and by-word, for their sins and iniquities.

*The border of wickedness, the people.* From their judgment and utter destruction, they gather their sin, and God's wrath, as the cause of their ruin and desolation.

*Doct.* From the general judgments of God upon a country or nation, men may gather their sins and God's wrath, their deserts and God's displeasure. So here, and threatened beforehand, Deut. xxix. 21, 22, and 1 Kings ix. 8, 9, and Jer. xxii. 8, 9, 'And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say, every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.'

* Cypr. de Orat. Dom.

*Reason.* Because, though it is read that he afflicteth particular men, for some other respects, as for the trial of their faith, the manifestation of their graces, the glorifying of himself, sometimes for preventing of sin, and shewing they are but men, though great things be done by them, as he did Job, the blind man, and the apostles, yet was it never read that he afflicted a general land, but for sin and iniquity, or a state generally. And the reason of this and the whole is, because general judgments come upon the multitude, who are ever wicked; who have been a long time spared for the good; who now, being either taken away, or entangled with their sin, that is removed which hindered, and so the wrath comes upon them. Then by these judgments may the sins be noted.

*Use* 1. Then have the ministers of God done us no wrong, when, for the general judgment that hath been upon our city and land, the spreading and devouring plague, they gather and affirm that we are marvellously defiled and polluted, even the border of wickedness. Some wrong might haply have been done to particular men, so to judge of them, when men either have not committed these sins which deserve it; but for some other cause it is befallen them, or they have humbled and reconciled themselves unto God, which another cannot so discern. But to the general there can be none, seeing God useth not to bring general plagues, but where the sins of men are general and full; whereas then 'the whole head hath been sick, and the whole heart heavy,' &c., Isa. i. 5, 6, it must needs follow that such hath been the state and time, 'covered with iniquity;' for wise physicians do not administer physic for the whole, when one part only is ill-affected; nor just magistrates do not shake or smite all with the sword, when a few have offended; much less will God only wise, and the most righteous judge, destroy the righteous with the wicked, send a general judgment, when but a few have deserved it. One man's sins may be an occasion of it, but the merits is general, as in David and his people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

*Use* 2. If others, passengers, lookers-on, may thus gather, what may those who suffer themselves, how may they gather their sins and his wrath? That their sins are many, and their fallings away general, because their judgments are thus. The one the cause, the other the proof, as did Daniel ix. 5–15. So may we, from our general judgments, argue general apostasy and impiety.

*They shall call them the borders of wickedness.* The first of God's witnesses, of such as give testimony to his judgments, and the uprightness, and justice of them, is the heathen, and other nations, who know him not aright.

*Doct.* God will have witness and testimony of his judgments, from wicked and profane nations and men, the wicked shall be witnesses of his judgments upon others; so here, so Deut. xxix. 22, Dan. v. 22, Rev. xviii. 8, 9, Ps. lviii. 7, 10, Dan. 3, 22 and vi. 24.

*Reason* 1. Because God will not only, as is said of wisdom, be justified of his children, but of the wicked and profane; for that may have some exception against it, lest it should be partial, this none in that kind, but God wresting this from him, making them, as Balaam's ass, to speak against nature, so they against their minds.

*Reason* 2. Because they might be without excuse, when the judgments of God came upon them. They have not humbled themselves, when they were made eye-witnesses, or such as had certain notice, of God's judgments. So Daniel infers, Dan. v. 22; and without doubt, that is it which doth amplify the sins of men, to make them riper for judgment, as of Cain and Lot's daughters.

*Use* 1. This may teach us, when we hear of wicked and profane men, speaking of the judgments of God upon others, not upon God's people only, which they may do in hatred of them, because they, like Israel, sacrifice that to God which they, as Egyptians, worship as God, their lusts and affections and such like: nor upon such, whose persons for some private respects they hate; but others, whose persons and sins they liked well enough before the judgment, yet now they speak of them, and give testimony to the judgment of God as just; for, say they, he was an adulterer, an usurer, an oppressor, or a grievous blasphemer, when they live, not in the same judgments, nor in the same sins, but in as great sins of another kind, living void of the fear of God, being wicked and profane. Therein observe the wisdom and providence of God, which makes even the wicked to witness for him, who, by his powerful providence, makes the wicked (whether in truth or hypocrisy it skills not) give testimony unto him, if the good will be silent; as these hold their peace, the stones shall speak. One instance we have worth the noting, agreeable to the times: our papists, for their late more than hellish plot, are taken, and nigh to their deserved ruin and confusion. They who are out of the snare cry, It is just with them, whether they speak out of ignorance and human piety, or out of cunning and dissembling policy (very tolerable in their superstition for the church's good), it skills not much; as Philip i. 15, 16, if such comparisons be not odious. Howsoever God is justified, and he hath testimony of his justice from the wicked, while they say, These are the border of wickedness, these are but a few desperate papists, and this is just upon them.

*Use* 2. To teach men, though wicked, yet by the company, encouragement, example, or applause of other wicked, not to commit that which may bring the judgment of God upon them; for, come when it will, they shall be as ready as other to justify God, and condemn them (whether in hypocrisy and sinister respect, it is not to the purpose, or in truth), when the other did not so strengthen their hands to sin, as that will press them, and make their hearts to sink in them. But let them learn to look to those judgments, of which God hath made them eye-witnesses, and given them as certain intelligence of them, and humble themselves to God, and avoid such and the like, lest as they give now testimony to the justice of God in seeing his punishments upon others, so others may give of them, yea, and by such things their sins be made the greater, and their judgments be the heavier.

*The border of wickedness.* That is, a nation or country, where the people are marvellous wicked, who have this recompence for their wickedness; insinuating in them the cause of their wickedness, the moving and deserving cause, their sins.

*Doct.* Men's sins are the causers and procurers of their own destruction, whatever it be. Isa. iii. 11, 'Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.'

*And a people of whom the Lord is angry for ever.* Here two things are intimated unto us: the one the cause in God, which moves him to punish the wicked, his anger and displeasure, as sin the cause in themselves; another, the perpetuity of their punishment, their destruction is for ever. First for the cause, then the continuance.

*Doct.* When the Lord bringeth vengeance and punishment upon the wicked, it is in indignation and wrath, whether temporal or eternal, upon few or many. Isa. xxvii. 4, God saith in his care of his vineyard, 'Fury is not in me.' By the opposition and comparison, we see his fury against the wicked. He corrects his own in love, not in anger; but he is as fire, which hath no pity, against wicked men: Rom. ii. 6, 8, 'Who will render to every man according to his works: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath;' and Rom. ix. 22, Jer. x. 25.

*Reason* 1. Because, when he cometh to judge them, he comes as a judge, who intends not the mending of malefactors arraigned before him, but the ending of them, and the cutting of them off, so he with these minds only their destruction.

*Reason* 2. Because the Lord accounts them as enemies and adversaries, such as he hates and abhors, Ps. v. 6. Now when men come against their enemies, it is in indignation and wrath, as Isa. i. 24, 'Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies,' mourning that to them he must come in wrath as to enemies.

*Use* 1. This proves that there is a manifest difference betwixt the afflictions and corrections of the godly, and the punishments of the wicked; those from love, these from hatred; those from a friend, these from an enemy; those from a physician who seeks to cure and mend them, these from a judge to end them; one in wrath, the other in love.

*Use* 2. To admonish wicked men, to carry themselves very warily, and to take heed how they procure

punishment by their sins, not only for the thing itself, but for the affection wherewith God will lay it upon them. The thing of itself is heavy enough, intolerable to be borne, which the children of God, with all the helps and stays they have, have enough to undergo and not to faint under; how is it to them who are void of such things? But how when they not only want it; but this is added, his indignation and wrath? Grievous to a patient is the lancing, cutting, searing, and corcives of the chirurgeon, though he do it with all the love and care he can possibly, and express his fervent desire to cure them. How grievous would it be if he should come raging, and seek to fill himself with wrath and indignation when he comes to it; so in this. As the prayers and sacrifices of the wicked are abominable, how much more when they are offered with a wicked mind; so in this, if they be heavy in themselves, what when they are brought upon them with indignation and wrath? The wrath itself is heavy, the messenger of death; what when such a thunder shall bring such horrible hail? Be admonished, then, you wicked ones, great and small, he respects not persons; and do not make sport of your sins. Think not, when God shall come to judgment, your riches or honours will bear it out, for not as he is a judge, much less as he is an ireful one, and full of wrath, and comes with indignation, will he be abused.

*For ever.* The continuance and perpetuity of God's wrath upon the wicked, it is not for a while, but for ever.

*Doct.* The punishments and judgments of the wicked, though often long in coming, they are always long in continuance, they are utter and perpetual destruction. So here, 'for ever,' Isa. xxvii. 7, 8, Ps. xxxvii. 18–20, Jer. xxx. 11, Micah vii. 10. And as in this life, much more in that to come, Jude ver. 13, Mat. xxv.

*Reason* 1. Because they have hearts that cannot repent, nor remove the cause of these judgments, their sins. These, then, cleaving fast to them, no marvel though the other be fastened upon them, Rom. ii. 5.

*Reason* 2. Because justice requires to punish proportionably. Their sins are infinite, not in time, not in quantity, yet in relation of persons. Sins increase by the person committing, and against whom; as in our state, the same offence against the king is greater than against another man.

*Use* 1. This, as the former, teacheth a manifest and smoother difference betwixt the correction of the good and the punishments of the wicked, when one is temporary, the other perpetual and eternal, here and after. With his, he deals only in the branches; with the wicked in the roots. His are as vines, the other as briars and thorns. The husbandmen, though they set the fire often to the thorns, and use the axe to the rooting and stocking of them up, yet to the vines do they never; sometimes they unbare the root, and use a pruning-knife to prune and purge them, that they may abide still in the vineyard and bring forth fruit.

*Use* 2. To teach us to see the folly of the wicked, and not to imitate their practice in sin for their pleasure, seeing their judgments are thus, John xxi. 6, Rev. ii. 27.

*Use* 3. Not to envy their prosperity, or be offended with their flourishing estate, *vide* Micah vii. 10, 20.

Ver. 5. *And your eyes shall see it, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified upon the border of Israel.*

*And your eyes shall see it.* The second witness of God's judgments upon Edom, the church, her eyes should see it. These God calls to give testimony of it; and that they should be witnesses without exception, he saith they should see; for one eye-witness is more than ten others, for it is a sense nothing so soon deceived as the hearing. By it we judge more certainly; that is, I have said it, it shall be most certainly, my threatenings shall not be in vain, for your eyes shall see it; which, unless I make my word good, cannot be; and thou shalt be a witness, that thou mayest see, when no such thing is befallen thee, that then I love thee. *Seeing*, after the Hebrew, is put for seeing with pleasure and delight, when, or because that comes to pass we wished. So here, and Micah vii. 10, Ps liv. 7, and xxxv. 21.

To this, not to the second sentence, some add, *the border of Israel*, and read, *from* the border, not *upon*; and so it is, they being safe in their own coast and borders, should thence behold the judgments of God, so manifest and perspicuous they should be, in the ruin and overthrow of the wicked.

*Doct.* The judgments God threatens against the wicked he certainly performs. His decrees for justice and punishment are as certain as for mercy and blessings. So here, and Num. xxiii. 19, 'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' 1 Sam. xv. 29, 'And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.' Hosea xiii. 14, Mat. xxiv. 35, Isa. xiv. 24.

*Reason* 1. Because he is without all change himself, therefore his decrees, Mal. iii. 6, Gen. i. 17; for he and his word are all one.

*Reason* 2. Because he cannot be resisted, Isa. xlvi. 10, Rom. ix. 19; for then he should not be omnipotent, but another as strong and mighty as he; but 'he is, and none like him.'

*Doct.* The church and children of God may rejoice at the destruction and fall of their enemies, Micah vii. 10.

*Doct.* As God will have testimony from the wicked of his judgments, so especially will he have his church and children witnesses of them; so here. Therefore did he in the sight of Israel lay so many plagues and judgments upon Egypt, Pharaoh, and his people, and his final destruction in their sight, they standing upon the shore, he and his host drowning in the sea, Exod. xiv.

Hence is it, Ps. lviii. 10, 'The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked;' and Ps. xcvii. 8, 'Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O Lord.' Micah vii. 10.

*Reason* 1. Because they might fear, and be affected with them to grow better, and to restrain and reform their ways by them. If the judgments of men must effect such a thing in them, Deut. xiii. 11, much more the judgments of God. And if the hearing of them, more the sight; for this affecteth more, as to pity and compassion, to joy and gladness, to anger and wrath, so to sorrow and dislike.

*Reason* 2. Because they might magnify and praise him, his wisdom, power, justice, as here; for though he wring it from the wicked, where it seems to be without partiality, as not this, yet is this far more acceptable to him, their praises as their prayers, for they are done willingly, cheerfully, sincerely, all which he loves. Besides, they are from those he loves, and so the things better affected.

*Use.* To teach every one that is God's what is his duty, what he ought to do, namely, not to shut his eyes at the judgments of God, but to open them wide, and to behold all his judgments. It is the part of children to observe all the works of their fathers, that they may imitate some and admire others; love them for some, and fear them for others; yea, their works, whether they touch themselves, or their fellow-brethren, or the hired servants: so it is the part of God's children to observe all his works, his meekness, mercifulness, goodness, patience, and long-suffering, to admire them, to imitate his bounty, care, providence, and richness in benefit towards them, to love him, his judgments, to fear him. If upon their brethren, to know they must look for the same, as they hope for the goods and blessings, so expect the evil and correction. If upon hirelings, as they think God will deal far better with them than the other. If he care for servants, more for sons; so to think he will no less spare them than servants, because they think he loves them; his judgments then must they specially look upon and consider. As children are specially affected with their father's anger, when it is but against servants or others, then they fear and tremble, seek to please him, and to avoid such things by which he is provoked, especially when there is any good nature in them at all; so ought they, that as it is written of the lion, that he trembles to see a dog beaten before him, so if they have any alliance to the Lion of the tribe of Judah, they must see and fear, fear and flee when the wicked are smitten, more when it is upon his own who are in the church and of the church, as David, Ps. cxix. 120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments;' and 2 Sam. vi. 9, 'And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?' and Acts v. 5, 11, 'And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.' And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard those things; not on as many as take no notice of the judgments of God at all, as not of other of his works, but as they think all things fall out by natural course or common skill, and providing, the fore-cast of men, for good, so they think for evil; and as they are not affected with God's blessings to love him, because they are common, so not with his judgments, but only when they feel them.

*Your eyes shall see it.* Edom hated Israel, enemy unto her, whose destruction as they sought, and had rejoiced at, so Israel would have been glad to have seen Edom's, and for fear was ready to faint, as if they should never see it. The Lord descends to her infirmity, and assures her she shall see it.

*Doct.* The Lord he often descends to the infirmities of his, to let them see their desires upon their enemies, and to see their destruction, as here; so Ps. xxxvii. 8–10, 'Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil, for evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth: for yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.' Ps. lix. 10, 'The God of my mercy shall prevent me; God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.' And Ps. liv. 7, 'For he hath delivered me out of all trouble, and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.' Israel saw Egypt's ruin, the Jews Haman's and their enemies', Daniel his accusers', Dan. vi.; Peter Herod's, Acts xii.

*Reason* 1. Because he might strengthen and confirm the weak faith of his children, which would often stagger in this kind without these stays, as the best have done upon the sight of the prosperity of the wicked, as David's, Ps. xxxvii., and their suffering at their hands; therefore God deals with them as parents with their children: when they are not able to go alone and of themselves, they have tressels and forms to go along by; so God affords these helps.

*Reason* 2. Because he would assuage and appease their impatient minds that can hardly be persuaded God is appeased towards them, and at one with them, after he had scourged and afflicted them by the hand of the wicked, till they see his hand turned upon the wicked; the rather, because God saith, Ps. lxxxi. 13, 14, 'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways; I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.' As then a father, to shew his child he is friends with him again, is content to throw the rod into the fire, and to burn it before his eyes and face; so God, to shew him pacified again towards his people, is content in their sight to plague those he hath punished them by before.

But this must be understood not as a thing that God always doth, but as it is said of signs, that he gave some, though not many and usual, lest men should depend on them, and be out of heart when they want them; yet some, for the confirming of the feeble and converting of the unbelievers; so he doth not always shew them the confusion of the wicked, their enemies in this life, because he would not have them to look for it, and to inure them to go without a stay, and to swim as it were without help, without bladders; and yet sometimes, lest they should faint when they see the rod of the wicked rest upon the lot of the righteous, and never turn again upon their oppressors; but if ever he deny it, he gives them another prop, to assure them they shall see it, though not now, when they shall judge with him the world and angels.

*Use* 1. To admonish the wicked enemies of God's people (if they would take notice of it) that oppose themselves, and persecute the people of God, to give over in time, and not to do it with such despite and malice, as usually they do, lest God comfort his servants in their confusion, and recompense unto them that they have done unto the church, and measure to them as they have meted. And having been fire to them, that is, to purge them, he extinguish them; for though they have them never so sure, as they suppose, in their clutches, yet God can free them as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, and take them in their net they thought to have taken others his people in. Who would have believed it? At least Haman himself would never have given credit to it, that Mordecai should ever have seen him hang upon the tree that he had prepared in his own house for Mordecai; or that the Jews that he had enclosed by virtue of the king's letters, as deer in a toil, should ever have had their will upon his house, and see that end of his sons that after they came unto. Yet so it was a thing so unlikely God brought to pass, even he: 2 Peter ii. 9, 'He knows how to deliver him out of trouble;' yea, and how to lay trouble upon those that trouble them, to the refreshing and comfort of his. Who would have believed (at least not our nobles, knights, and esquires, with their dependents, who are now forthcoming, with hundreds more of the said associates), if the day before it had been told them, that the church and people of God should have seen them in hold, and see them come to their just reward, to the ruin of themselves and their houses, when they intended all their destructions, and to have subverted church and commonwealth; or if it had been told the pope at Rome whence this came, who would have been ready to have done as Sixtus Quintus in his consistory, when Clement the monk and bloody parricide had slain Henry III., king of France, 1589, a Catholic king, his eldest son, did not punish it, but excuse it; not that only, but defend it; not that alone, but praised it, and that with that choice and excellent comparison from the birth of Christ, Heb. i. 5, commanding the heavens to open and receive therein the parricide, and shut out the other, yea, and denied him the prayers of their synagogue, yea, princely funeral, yea, honest burial, preparing the way to heaven, not by the blood of Christ, but by the blood of kings; not by the cross, but by a murdering knife. See the martyrs of the Romish Church, with what ashes it is increased. I have stepped aside. But to come home: if it had been told him, I say, and all his slaves, and our fugitives, and all his in other countries, who were not without the knowledge at least of these things, they would not have believed; but see it is even so: 2 Peter ii., 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished.' It were well for their own good they would be warned at length, when they see God fights for us everywhere, and watcheth over us in every place, and brings all their purposes to nought. It were better if they, as the people, enemies of the church, Esther viii. 17, 'became Jews, the fear of the Jews falling upon them;' so they should become protestants, and renounce their antichrist, our fear falling upon them, when they see they are not only so bloody as Haman, but so bootless, before such a thing befall them.

*Use* 2. This may serve to cheer up and comfort those who are the Lord's in the midst of dangers and troubles; they are never so far from God but God may yet, ere they die or be overthrown, relieve them by temporal deliverance, and send those packing before them, who think to make a spoil of them, and let them see the miserable and wretched ends of those who make full reckoning to seek their blood, and ruinate their state. How many distressed souls in the days of Queen Mary, think we, in this land lay looking daily for death, when God, by the death of one, made an end of that bloody time that had cut off the lives of so many of God's servants, and let them see even the ruin of such as made full account of theirs. What hope had the Israelites but to be eaten up by the Egyptians, and to be cut off, as one man, when God in the turning of a hand overturned them that even opened their mouths, and swallowed them up quick, and overwhelmed them before their eyes in the Red Sea. Little thought Daniel, when he was cast into the lions' den, that he should see his accusers devoured before him. And very unlikely it was that Peter should have lived to have seen Herod consumed with worms, and eaten up with lice, when Herod had him forthcoming, and had killed James before him, Acts xii. And small probability, as we may now discern, was there that we, our kings, &c., should have escaped the cruel designs of our bloody Edomites, the papists, when their barbarous plot was come to the ripeness, and had been concealed so many months; small presumption was there that our eyes should see the times as they are now, and the ruin of them who were set on murder and blood; yet may we use that Ps.

xlviii. 8, 'As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever.' And with David, Ps. liv. 7, 'For he hath delivered me out of all trouble, and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies,' that we may learn to cleave to the Lord who hath thus fought for us, and let us see his salvation, and say as the three resolved servants of God, Dan. iii. 17, 18, 'If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.' So not to shrink from him, but say, We know our God is able to destroy our enemies before our face; but whether he do or no, we will depend ever upon him.

*Your eyes shall see it.* The Edomites, when the Jews were surprised by the Chaldeans, stood looking on, and laughing at their destruction, Obad. 12, 13. Now God telleth them they should be served with the same sauce themselves; the Jews should see their calamities that should befall them, and be comforted in their fall, who rejoiced before over them in theirs.

*Doct.* It is a just and usual thing with God in the general, as to recompense a man as he hath done with others, as he said, Judges i. 7, and to measure as is meted, Mat. vii. 2; so in this particular, when they rejoice at the fall of other men, to make other glad at their fall. So was it told Edom: Obad. ver. 15, 'For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.' And Prov. xxiv. 17, 18, 'Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.'

*Reason* 1. Because he hath made a law for the magistrate, executing his justice and judgments to do so, as Lev. xxiv. 19, 20, and that not for the deed only, but for the endeavours, when the end of them are made manifest, and he must not pity him, Deut. xix. 19–21. Now if he make a law for others, he will not break it himself when it is fitting and comely for him; for some things befit him not, no more (saith one) than a countryman's coat becomes a king; but this being not of that nature, he will do it.

*Reason* 2. Because of his own reason to the judge, Deut. xix. 19, 20, no way so excellent to prevent much evil and oppression, and hurting of others, for men would abstain, not in love to others, not for love of righteousness, but for fear of this law of retribution; besides, it is a special means to break off sin, at least that for fear of more in the party so offending.

*Obj.* Then you taught us false doctrine before, when you taught we may rejoice at the destruction of the wicked; for if this be just with God, then is not that lawful with men?

*Sol.* This is not contrary to that, because there was spoken of public enemies, here either of no enemies or private enemies, such as dislike us, and we them, for some sinister respect. As it is lawful to kill a public enemy of a state, but not a man's private enemies, so of rejoicing against the enemies of God and his truth, not their own. Therefore saith Solomon, Prov. xxiv. 17, 'Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.'

*Use.* 1. Then may men expect for this retribution from the Lord, upon many whom they see oppressing, undermining, disgracing, and triumphing over others, when they have wrought their fall often by indirect and vile means. Histories of all times are full of examples, besides the Scripture. One we may observe of Constantine, son of the empress Irene, who put out the eyes of Nicephorus, and by retribution from God had his own eyes put out by the cruelty of his mother the very same day six years, or thereabouts. The like of the destruction of Jerusalem, that it was in the same day they crucified Christ, *Lege Euseb.* lib. iii. c. 5, *fine;* so it was by the same men that put him to death, the Romans, as Basil observes. They are living who can remember in former princes' times, Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Mary, how justly God did repay our nobility, when they cut off one another's heads. The like may be expected in future time, as they have done, shall be done unto them; nay, the like we have a comfortable aspect, or may have, to see how God justly doth make that true: 1 Kings xxi. 19, 'And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord thy God, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.' When our papists had thought our blood should have been licked up, theirs shall be, God holding his own law, doing to them as they would have done to us; or seeing that is not done in the strict justice that God requireth, we may fearfully expect, for this sin of ours, this retribution from the Lord, as in 1 Kings xx. 42, 'And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thine hand a man whom I appointed for utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.'

*Use.* 2. To teach every man to take heed how he carries himself to others, how he injures and oppresseth them; and to do but that to others, the like he would have others to do and receive from them. The rule of nature is, *Quod tibi non vis, alteri ne feceris;* and that of Christ, Mat. vii. 12, 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.' Of which Tertullian: God hath measured out my actions by my will, that I should not do that unto others which I would not have done unto myself; and should do to others as I would have others to do

to me. And if that of James will and shall be true,—James ii. 13, 'He shall have judgment without mercy, that sheweth no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment,'—how much more extreme cruelty shall be inflicted upon them who carry themselves cruelly to others! Men should take heed, then, how they abuse their power and authority to the oppressing and wronging of the weak, their skill and cunning to circumvent and beguile the simple, their countenance and credit to use men at their pleasure, lest God meet with them as he did the Edomites.

*Use* 3. In the particular, to take heed how that he insult not over the fall of his enemy (less of another), lest God give them the like occasion by so casting us down. It is that which Solomon advised, Prov. xxiv. 17, 18. It is a crime which Job laboureth to clear himself of: Job xxxi. 29, 30, 'If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lift up myself when evil found him; neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul.' Teaching that a man should be free, not only from outward show, but from inward touch of joy. The first is easy, partly by nature, and partly by cunning and hypocrisy, to cover it at least from a multitude or many; but the other is hard, and the harder more commendable, more to be laboured for; and the outward odious to man, so the inward to God, which looks not *in facie*, but *in corde*, as Cyprian; and a special means to make him turn his hands upon us. Avoid it, labour against it; if it steal upon us, check it, repel and cast it out.

*And ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified.* The second thing in this verse, the magnifying of God. The thing is a special effect, which God's judgments work in his people and church, differing from the wicked and Gentiles; for they see it, and but jibe and jest only at the Edomites, as they had at Israel; but Israel sees it, and magnifies God for it. The words are originally somewhat otherwise: the Lord doth magnify himself. True, for so he doth in destroying these; magnifies and honours himself, and they religiously so confess it, and celebrate his magnificence and greatness for delivering themselves, his church, and people, and destroying their enemies. Hence we may observe two things and lessons.

*Doct.* It is the glory of God to deliver his people, and destroy their enemies; it is that which doth honour and magnify him much, and spreadeth his fame far and nigh. So it is here, and Isa. xxx. 18, 'And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted: that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him.' Dan. ix. 15, 19, 'And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought the people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten the renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.' Ps. lxxiv. 10, 11, 'O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.'

*Reason* 1. Because he is their God and King, these his people and subjects: Ps. lxxiv. 12, 'For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.' It were a shame and dishonour for a prince to suffer his subjects to lie in misery and distress, specially if he be able to relieve them; *è contra*, it spreads his fame far and near when he succoureth and saveth them.

*Reason* 2. Because they are rebels, it is the prince's honour to overthrow them.

*They shall say, The Lord doth magnify himself.* That is, they shall give the honour of their deliverance and the glory of their preservation to God, when the enemy is destroyed, and they safe.

*Doct.* The people of God, in all deliverance and preservation from what danger soever, by what means or howsoever, ought to give the praise and glory of it to God; so here taught what to do: Ps. l. 15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Hosea xiv. 3, 'Asshur shall not save us: we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods, for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.' Examples of Moses and Miriam, with the people, Exod. xv.; of Barak and Deborah, Judges v.; of Esther and the Jews, Esther viii.; of Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii.

*Reason* 1. Because it is he alone who is the Deliverer and Saviour of his people. Means he often affords them, and means they use, and must, lest they tempt God; but that means are not effectual, it is ever from him, else why one and the same means bring to some deliverance, to others none? Hence Ps. cxliv. 10, 'It is he that giveth salvation to kings, who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.'

*Reason* 2. Because in this, as in all other benefits, it is the high way to obtain more and new deliverances. When we pay the old, we run on a new score. As men are encouraged to help when they receive their just glory, for that is past, so God is drawn on, as it were, to bestow new.

*Use* 1. This serves to reprove the common practice of men, who are ready to give, and do give, the glory of all their deliverances to others than God, and not to him. If victory in war, they ascribe it to the wisdom and power of such and such, and ofttimes ready to make war among themselves for the honour of the day, when God is never thought on; in other preservation or establishment, to the wisdom of their gravest and experienced senate; from sickness, to physicians and such other means, not at all to the Lord, never magnify nor praise him; God seldom made mention of, or

only cursorily, and because of those who are present; for which cause he oft taketh from them their means, that either they may perish in new dangers, or else more sensibly discern that it is he that gives deliverance.

*Use* 2. To instruct all and every one to give the glory and praise of all their deliverances whatsoever unto God, and to magnify his name for them. Particular deliverances from danger and sickness, and such like, every man must magnify God and his name for it. Our first seeking in danger should be to him, and he should be the first we should praise for the deliverance; not as many, that do both send first for the physician before they send up to God, agree with him before with God, and praise him oftener to men than ever they did God. But it should not be so; he should be magnified principally and chiefly. Yea, every one for our general deliverances, of which we are all partners, should magnify him, of which we may say, as Jer. xxiii. 7, 8, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.' Many are the deliverances we have had, and this nation: from the tyranny of Rome's Church at the death of Queen Mary; from the invincible navy, '88; from the insurrection of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland; from the treason of the Duke of Norfolk and Queen of Scots; from that of Babington and his fellows; from Arden, Somerville, Parry, Cullen, Lopes, Squire, and such like; yet now to this that it may be said, the Lord lives that hath delivered his church from any one or all the former, but from the cruel, bloody, and desperate unmatchable plot of our wicked papists, which is the Lord's only, because the carriage of the thing was his, that he would have it wholly ascribed to him. Therefore we may say, the Lord hath magnified himself many ways, but now he hath surmounted them all. We ought then to magnify him, and give the glory of it to him, not in word only, but for ever in deed: the parliament, king, and commons, to make laws more for his glory against Sabbath breaking, oaths, drunkenness, usury, oppression; to further his church, and to remove stumbling-blocks; the judges to execute them, without sparing and partiality; all to obey God more constantly, and man for God; for, disburdening us of the danger and fear, he burdens us* with more obedience and thankfulness. This all should do; yet, if it be not in general, let every one for himself and his family, as Joshua, and mourn for the sins of his time. God will mark him when he brings a plague, Ezek. ix. In times of danger, many are *petentes*, few *promittentes*, most few *persolventes*. But we must not only ask deliverance, but promise new obedience, and perform our vows, else let us look for that, Mat. xxiii. 37, 38.

* Deus exonerans onerat.—*Bern.*

Ver. 6. *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?*

We have seen the first sin reproved in this people, together with the arguing of it, and the evincing of them of it. The second followeth, from this to the ninth verse. It is contempt and profanation of God's service and worship; and in it, as in the former, we have, first, God's accusation; secondly, the debating of it. And in this, first, their answer and excuse; secondly, God's reply manifestly evicting them of it. In God's accusation, we consider the vice he accuseth them of; secondly, the persons. In the first, the thing and the reason of it, which is first set down, then applied. The ground is a plain axiom in nature, or a rule of nature.

*A son honoureth his father.* Though the handling of these duties seem not so essential to this place, aiming at his own honour rather than theirs, yet it being so necessary, and the contempt so great, it shall not be amiss to stand upon it. The coherence and meaning is plain; we must speak, first, of the duty, then of party, to them. The duty is first, inward reverence, a reverent affection to them.

*Doct.* Children, sons and daughters, must inwardly reverence their parents, carry reverent affections and opinions towards them. This is a special part of honour to be performed to them. Solomon makes it the part of a wicked child to despise his mother, Prov. xv. 20. He commands not to despise the mother, no, not when she is old, Prov. xxiii. 22. He threatens a fearful curse from God to such: Prov. xxx. 17, 'The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.' And if the king must be well thought of, Eccles. x. 20, how the parent, to whom our affection naturally is more! Ham's curse came in part for his unreverent thought towards his father, Gen. ix.

*Reason* 1. Because God hath made them reverend, in that he hath communicated unto them part of his excellency and dignity. Now, then, as a man cannot endure to see so much as his picture or image lightly regarded, and not set by, but cast at the heels of those who ought to reverence it; so God, who regardeth the heart and inward affection as much or much more than the outward action, cannot abide to see any spark of his own image despised, or any unreverent thought conceived of those whom he hath graced with extraordinary dignity of excellency or authority.

*Reason* 2. Because they ought to love them; and if they do love them, they cannot disdain them nor

despise them; for, 1 Cor. xiii. 5, 'love disdaineth not.'

*Reason* 3. Because else outward reverence is unsound, feigned, and counterfeit, when the inward is wanting; as the inward is lame, maimed, and unperfect without the outward.

*Use* 1. To teach every child to see his sin, even every one of us; for who can say that his heart is clean that hath had natural parents living, when he had use of reason, to whom, though he have given outward respect and reverence, for some sinister respect, for fear, or shame, or gain, or the rod, the world, or hope of some better portion; yet he hath had many disdainful and despising thoughts of his parents, which, if they were disliked and resisted, were the less sin, but not checked in them, they have proved the seed and spawn of many outward corruptions and unreverences toward them, yea, of much disobedience and dishonouring of them; for, as the mouth speaketh of the abundance of the heart, so the eye looketh scornfully, or the tongue speaketh disdainfully, or the whole outward carriage is disloyal, when the heart is so corrupted; for Ham's dishonouring his father to his brethren rose from the disdaining of him in his heart in secret. But if it hath not broken out to this, but either grace hath subdued it, or worldly respect hath made us smother it, yet must it be put upon the account among our sins, when we humble ourselves before the Lord for them, to get a discharge of these as well as others.

*Use* 2. To teach every child to whom God hath given that comfort, that he hath parents, both or one, to labour for all good and reverent affection towards them, to honour them in his heart, and inwardly to have all honourable estimation of them; for the Lord he looks into the heart, and this he requires, as the other, and by all means labours against the contrary, and that which is condemned of God, which will make them contemn the counsels and advice of their parents, whose persons they disdain in their hearts, and take everything from them in the worse part, and so make their whole government unprofitable unto them. Besides, the fear of God's curse threatened, Prov. xxx., as he well said, he was a sinner with a witness, whom the Holy Ghost gave witness against, so he is accursed with a witness, whom the Holy Ghost so accurseth; for it (saith Tremellius) God will condemn and bring that person to some evil end or other, who shall scorn and disdain his parents; for his curses are not threatenings alone, but inflictions; not denouncings, but performance. This were a good caveat to be written upon the doors of young men's and women's hearts, to banish and keep out the unreverent and scornful thoughts of their parents, and a fitter posie to be written upon the walls of parents than the vain inventions of poets and painters.

The second is outward reverence, both in word and carriage towards them.

*Doct.* Children, sons and daughters, must outwardly reverence their parents, that is, in behaviour and speech; give them all reverent respect in gesture, and such titles as are due unto them; for if inward, more outward, seeing the contrary is more offence to them who take notice of it, more grief to their parents that see and hear them. Hereto belongs that, Prov. xxx. 11. There is a generation that curseth their father, and hath not blessed their mother; and that he speaketh of the eye, ver. 17, shews that in the whole outward man is required reverence. Hence was the blessing of Shem and Japhet, Gen. ix. 23, 26, 27. Hence was the excuse of Rachel, Gen. xxxi. 35, and the practice of Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 19, 20.

*Reason.* Besides those in the former point, this may confirm it: because they have their bodies, whole, and parts from them, made of their seed, framed in her womb, nursed and nourished up by them, then ought they, by the whole and parts, to do them all the reverence they possibly can.

*Use* 1. To teach every one to see his sins past or present, when they have been in this marvellous defective; nay, doing the contrary, little reverence in gesture and speech to their parents, short of that it should have been; nay, often carrying disdainful eyes, disloyal and despiteful tongues, the sins of our youth in this respect to be repented of. The cause with many why they are despised and want this outward reverence of theirs, God using this retribution because they have done so; yea, and when they have children of years to discern such things, who see them unreverently use their parents both in gesture and speech, both with looks and words, who teach them how to use them, while they let them see how they use theirs; yea, divers parents (myself have been an eye-witness of some), who teach their children when they are young, not only to disdain others, but themselves; the father teaching the child to scoff or miscall his mother, and delight in it; which falls out justly, that they keep the scent of this liquor, and when they are elder, so despise and contemn them. But if, now when they find such things from theirs, it is good to call to mind their own sins, and to think that they thus use me, for I have used mine the like, and yet never repented of it.

*Use* 2. To persuade every child (as before) to labour to give them all reverence both in his word and carriage; to think it little enough to reverence them with the whole and every part which they received from him. Let none think this is needless, or too much curiosity to stand upon such things; they acknowledge them their parents (and respect them somewhat), what need all this? for this must be done, and not greater things neglected, and the sins of children in this kind are in some sort greater than those in the other of greater note; for as a man sometimes sins worse in a small than in a greater fault, for the greater by how much the sooner it is acknowledged, it is quick-

lier mended; but the lesser, while it is counted almost none at all, is therefore worse, because we more securely live in it.* So of this particular, though disobedience and want of reverence differ in themselves, yet is unreverence thus the greater, because it is accounted as none, and men lie very secure in it. Therefore ought men to avoid it, and strive against it, both because they are forbidden, and because, as a little wound neglected will fester to a great one, so this unreverence accustomed will break out to a greater contempt and disobedience; and if Christ make him culpable of sin that saith but Raca to his equal, and him of hell-fire which calleth him *fool*, Mat. v. 22, what shall he be worthy of that calleth his parents so, and useth them most unreverently? And if, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24, children that mocked the prophet were torn with bears, how shall such things escape a judgment? They shall not, for that of Solomon shall be true, Prov. xxx. 17. The outward reverence must not stand in signs and words only, but as 1 John iii. 18 speaks of love, 'My little children, let us not love in words, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth,' so say we of this; this reverence must appear in our actions, and this will part itself into obedience and subjection. For the first so much.

*Doct.* Children, sons and daughters, must not only give inward and outward reverence in thoughts and words, but they must obey them, as Christ sheweth by his condemning of the son who obeyed not, Mat. xxi. 30. Hence are the commandments, Col. iii. 20, 'Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord;' in all lawful things, as the like, 1 Cor. ix. 22, 'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some,' as far as I may lawfully, not seeking my own profit; 1 Cor. x. 33, 'Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved;' in all lawful things, not seeking his own profit, preferring the pleasing of them before it, the opposition being betwixt his and their pleasure and profit, not betwixt their profit and pleasing of God; so in this, not between parents and God, but their will and their parents, shewing that the son is not to obey his father in what he will and liketh, but he is simply bound in all things, though never so dislike to him, so they be not displeasing to God. Hence is the commandment, but with some limitation, Eph. vi. 1, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.' The Lord, when he commends the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv., doth shew this thing as a duty.

*Reason* 1. Because it is a thing well pleasing the Lord, Col. iii. 20; so pleasing, as that his own obedience is more acceptable with it, and without it he will not like of his own at all, as appeareth Mat. xv. 5, 6, 'But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.' And undoubtedly, he that preferred pity and mercy to men before sacrifice, doth much account of piety towards parents.

*Reason* 2. Because if not in all things, but where they please, and according to their own will, then they prefer themselves before their parents, and indeed obey not their father, but themselves. As they who love others from whom they look for good do not love them but themselves, so in this; therefore is it that they must endeavour to obey in all things unpleasing.

*Use* 1. To reprove all disobedience that is found in children of all sorts to their parents, young and elder, and all ages. If the law, Deut. xxi. 18–21, were now in force, alas, how many parents should long before this be bereaved of all, some of divers of their children; because not only negligence is to be found, and omission, but in many, apparent contempts, upon whom the law was to take hold! See your sins and forsake them, O children! else know, that if the former shall not go unpunished, less this; and if such punishments for that, more for this. And know you, that if you have, or may have children, and live to that, God shall make them revenge your parents' quarrel and contempt, to bring you to repentance or to punish you for it; and the more securely you now contemn the admonitions of the ministers, the more sharply shall God then punish you, and the more piercing shall it then be unto your souls.

*Use* 2. Let this, then, admonish every child to give obedience to his father's commandments, whatsoever they are, not only when they are pleasing to him, but even how cross soever they be to his liking, doing his father's will, not his own, being affected in regard of his earthly father as Christ was of his heavenly: John vi. 38, 'For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me;' and therefore was contented to break himself of his own will, rather than to cross his Father's will, Mat. xxvi. 39; so must they. To obey them in things that are pleasing and profitable unto them, liking them well enough, is not so commendable, because they may be led with these respects rather than duty or love; but in things difficult and hard, crossing their will and affections, is a double obedience, and shall receive a greater reward. Therefore endeavour thus to obey them, and God in them; it is not his will of permission, but of command, wherein God's law is broken, if they be disobedient. And not so only, but he will reject all service done to them* when they neglect that they owe to

* Nonnunquam in parvâ deterius quàm in majore culpâ peccatur; major enim culpa quo citiùs agnoscitur, eò etiam celeriùs emendatur; minor verò dum quasi nulla creditur, eò pejor est, quo et securiùs in usu retinetur.—*Greg.*

* Qu. 'to him'? or 'by them'?—ED.

theirs, so that he will be deaf to their prayers, contemn their service; his eyes shall be shut to their miseries; they may pray, he will not hear; stretch out long hands, he will not regard; yea, cry to him, yet will he not accept. If the sighs of thy father and tears of thy mother come up before God, for thy rebellions towards them, think that thy prayers shall little be accepted of God. If Moses his words to God for the rebellion of Korah before God, Num. xvi., made not only their sacrifice unacceptable, but brought a curse upon them, think of it, and take heed of the like.

But some in this matter may doubt, and for it object and question thus:

1. First, What if God commanded one thing, and men's parent another? It is answered, thou must then answer with the apostles, Acts v. 29, 'We ought to obey God rather than man;' or hear from God, Mat. xv. 3, 'Why do you also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition?' For ever his command is above them and theirs, else this were to make them gods, and God man, and were a deed of idolatry performed unto them. Martin Luther said well, that in keeping of the first precept was shewed obedience of all the rest; for hereby we acknowledge God to be our God in preferring his will before the will of any other. And so whose will we prefer before God's, we take them to be our god. The apostle makes the devil to be the prince of this world, because men obey his will before God's; so in this. Therefore, if the question be of these two, God must first be obeyed. Honour thy father, but so as he draw thee not from thy true Father, so long acknowledge the bond of blood as he acknowledgeth his Creator; otherwise as it is, Ps. xlv., 'Hearken, O daughter! forget thine own people and thy father's house,' saith St Jerome to Furia.* And his reason is, thou art not his of whom thou wert born, but new-born, who hath redeemed thee with a great price, even his blood.† And Clemens Romanus, *Epistola* iv., to the said purpose: Our parents are not the authors but the instruments of our life, they give not life, but are the means of entering it; only God is the author and fountain of life.‡ He is then to be preferred, and his commandments; and not as many who have excuse for things they do, our fathers did so, or they commanded us. In things wherein God hath neither commanded nor forbidden, it is sufficient; but where either, there must they take notice of it, and obey him. But yet he must do it with due respect and reverence, manifesting no contempt of their authority.

* Honora patrem tuum, sed si te à vero Patre non separat, tamdiu scito sanguinis copulam, quamdiu ille suum noverit creatorem: alioquin, Ps. xlv. 10.—*Hieron. Ep.* viii. *ad Furiam.*

† Non es ejus cui nata es, sed cui renata, et qui te grandi pretio redemit, sanguine suo.

‡ Authores non sunt vitæ nostræ parentes, sed ministri; non enim vitam præbent, sed ingrediendi in vitam exhibent ministerium; solus Deus vitæ author et fons est.—*S. Clem. Rom. Ep.* iv.

2. Some will demand, The magistrate commands me one thing and my parents a contrary; what must I do, whom must I obey? It is answered that the magistrate must be obeyed; for God hath given him a larger commission than to them, for they themselves are subject, as their children; who neither may do nor command contrary to their authority, but doing so he sinneth and the son sinneth in obeying. Again, princes' commands commonly respect common good, and the good that is more common is more excellent. A common good must not be neglected for a private, nor this preferred before it. A man's country is to to be preferred before his parents, and the goods of it; and to obey them were not a good thing, for *bonum non suo loco non est bonum*, a good thing out of its place is not good; blood out of the veins in other vessels is hurtful, though in his place the life consist in it. A good thing not done in his place were better undone, yea, it cannot be well done. Moreover, we must distinguish betwixt the affection and action. A man may love his parents better than the magistrate, but he must obey him rather; as he may love a good man better than a great man, yet in many cases he is not bound to do so much for him: the first, because God hath shewed his special love more to him than them; the second, because God hath given him a great authority of command. So it is in this inward affection and outward obedience, because the bond of nature is stronger in the one, and the force of authority is greater in the other. Finally, if the things prejudice the State, they must not be obeyed; but if it do not prejudice the public good, and be much benefit to a private parent, so the ends of the two be regarded, and no contempt of authority shewed, and a man be content to abide the penalty, a man may disobey, and prefer parents before magistrates without sin to God, as in the case of Esther and Mordecai, and the Jews' and the king's commandment.

3. What if my father commands me one thing, and my master the contrary; I am a servant or an apprentice, what must I do?

*Ans.* As before, obey thy master, for thy father hath given over his authority to him, over whom he hath no power; for his power is not subordinate to thy father's, as a steward or tutor, wherein there is reservation, but absolute, and thou art now of another regiment and corporation. But yet, as before, thy affection may be more to thy father, but thy labour and service to thy master; thou mayest wish his good more, but thou must work for and procure the other's good, for that end thou wast placed under his power. But if, without neglect of thy master's affairs, thou may be helpful to thy parents standing in need of thy help, or by leave and consent, thou art no more free to refuse now than before.

4. I am the daughter of my father, he hath bestowed me in marriage; if the commands of husband and father cross one another, whom must I obey? Un-

doubtedly thy husband, for the father hath given over his authority to him; and more than in the former, both thy affection and action must be more to thy husband, love him better and obey him rather. For Gen. ii. 24 is spoken comparatively, when the one must be forsaken, or in cases that so fall out that both be in question. For he ceaseth not to be a father still, but reserveth to him as reverence, so obedience while it is not cross, yea, in some things he may challenge it that are cross, if it be not to the prejudice of thy husband's good, and greatly for his help; yea, and thou must obey him with some hazard of thyself, so there be no contempt of the authority of thy husband; as in the case of Esther, which serves both for a subject and a wife. Hitherto of their obedience, now of their subjection and submission; and this may consist in these things, first, for correction.

*Doct.* Children must submit themselves to their parents, to be rebuked and corrected by them. It is that which we have, Prov. xv. 5: 'A fool despiseth his father's instruction; but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.' When the apostle maketh it a reason for subjection to God, Heb. xii. 9, 10, it must needs hold in this; yea, the apostles will carry it, not only when they do it justly and from sufficient matter, but for a wrong cause, which the tenth verse sheweth, implying thereby that this submission is required when they shall correct of a spleen or a humour, for their own fancy and pleasure only, without good ground or manner. May not this be seen by that of Isaac submitting himself to his father, to cut him at his pleasure, Gen. xxii.; yea, of Israel,* to be circumcised; and of Christ to his mother, Luke ii. 48, 49?

*Reason* 1. Because by this they shew wisdom: Prov. xiii. 1, 'A wise son heareth his father's instruction, but a scorner heareth not rebuke; and they get and increase wisdom': Prov. xxix. 15, 'The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame;' for they learn to avoid the like sins, and to escape greater strokes from their father. That which gets† wisdom must be submitted to.

*Reason* 2. Because by it they prevent greater destruction, and bring to salvation. They are called, 'the way of life,' Prov. vi. 23. Wholesome things though bitter, to prevent greater evil and bring health, we easily submit ourselves to the physician's hand to receive.

*Reason* 3. Because they come from love, Prov. xiii. 24. For those men love not, or they hate in effect, under affection, those they correct not.

*Use* 1. To reprove the stubborn and stiff-necked children of our age, who repine at their fathers' reproof, their hearts ready to swell against them if they check them for their carriage; specially when they are of some few years, they will frown as long as their parents can do. They imagine they know how to carry themselves well enough, yea, better than their parents, and often give them word for word, or mutter and murmur marvellously against them; the cause being not only want of grace in their own hearts, but the omission of correction and the rod when they were younger, because they did not correct them betime. Many parents, like Eli, neglecting the rod when they were young, cockering of them, that they get such heads when they are grown that they will not bear the rod, and better nothing at all by their reproofs, but they live often to see their perishing, as Eli did his sons. Whereas if they be duly and maturely used to the rod and correction, they will be nothing so audacious, and in the end a word shall do more with them than many stripes.

*Use* 2. To teach children to give honour unto their parents, in submitting themselves to their reproofs and correction. Wisdom will make them take them from others who are far off, when it may be doubtful with what mind they do it; how much more from parents, of whose love they cannot doubt! It is profitable, saith Chrysostom, *Hom.* 27, *ad pop. Antioch*, to have many admonishers and keepers; many reprovers is profitable; because, as a beast that is hunted and set on all sides cannot escape, so shall not a sin or vice; but when such as are so nigh us, who see in secret and open, it is far better. But we could bear it if there were cause, and we had deserved; but when they do it without cause, as we think unjustly, that is it which makes us repine. First, know that the physician sees often more than the patient; so doth the parent. But if yet there be no cause, the apostle shews yet we should submit. And we should consider, as Jerome would have Salvina to judge of his reproof, that it was *ex abundantia amoris*, and it is his *cujus votum est, te nescire, quæ metuit.* Besides, it is more thankworthy when a man can, in such cases, suppress the rising and swelling of his impatient and corrupt nature, only for conscience of the commandment; for here being some conflict betwixt his word and our will, he taketh trial of our obedience, who hath simply commanded subjection in this kind to children, which is to be obeyed, as that 'thou shalt not steal.' Therefore should every one endeavour to it, and think it is the part of a good child to kiss the rod that beats as the hand that gives.

The second thing wherein their subjection is required, and submission, is for their calling and education.

*Doct.* Children must submit themselves unto their parents to what calling they shall think fit to bring them up in and to. So did Samuel to his mother: he yielded to her to be set apart for the service of God, and to be brought up to it, 1 Sam. i. 28. For that which she gave he performed. So David submitted himself to his father to be a shepherd, and some of his brethren soldiers. So Christ was disposed of by his parents when he was fit to teach others, and for

* Qu. 'Ishmael'?—ED. † That is, 'begets.'—ED.

another manner of work, Luke ii. 46, yet 'he went and was subject to them,' and in the same trade, ver. 51, and Mark vi. 3. Justin Martyr thinks so; it was likely the wisdom of God to blind the wicked, and hide him from their eyes. Then as 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' So for this particular.

*Reason* 1. Because they in all reason are far better able to judge of them and their parts and gifts, what they are fit for, and wherein they are most like to give them most comfort, and glorify God, and profit themselves, than they can of themselves. That same borrowed speech, Ps. cxxvii. 4, 5, 'As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth; happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate,' seems to insinuate somewhat they are as arrows of divers heads, some fit for one mark, some for another; he hath them in his hand, and knows best which is fit for which.

*Reason* 2. Because they are not in their own power, but his, while they live in his house and government, but part of his substance; therefore the devil smote not Job's wife, as part of himself, but his children, as part of his substance and temporal goods. It is equal then he should have the disposition of his children, not themselves or others.

*Reason* 3. It shall appear that he may dispose of them in marriages, and not any other, nor themselves, which is then when they are of more years, and grown of greater discretion in the world, more when they are younger, and without experience.

*Use* 1. To reprove the sins of many children, who sometime without asking consent, if denied, do dispose of themselves at their own pleasure in what calling they like, as if their parents had no power over them; as if they only knew what was fit for themselves, and their parents wanted the wit and experience they have to dispose of them for the best; the cause of many miscarrying of them, and not prospering in their profession, because they went not to it the right way, only led by their affection without judgment, not knowing what God had fitted them for, nor regarding their parents, whom God had set over them for that purpose, whence often the curse of God is upon them, that they prosper not in such courses; or if by the indulgence of God they prosper, that their parents see not their ruin, yet when they are dead, their sin living, not repented of, they are requited often in the same kind again. As they did to their parents, so their children do to them, yea, often not without them, but far worse courses than they took.

The third thing wherein their subjection is required, and submission, is for their portion and child's part.

*Doct.* Children must submit themselves unto their parents in receiving their provision and portion, and be content with that they have provided and allotted unto them, whether in their life or at death, not being their own carvers, nor sharing it out as they list. The prodigal son, amongst much evils, is noted to be free from this, to share himself, but was content his father's portion; whereas his elder brother, though free from many other evils, yet is blotted with this, Luke xv. 12, 29. It is commended in the sons of Abraham, that they in this thing submitted themselves, at least no contrary thing is manifested of them, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. As Adonijah is reproved for usurping the kingdom, and making his father's will for him, not content with his portion, so is it the commendations of the rest of David's children that they were content with their portions, and never murmured that Solomon, not the eldest, but the son of David's age, had the kingdom given him of his father, 1 Kings i. The rest of the patriarchs are not recorded to be malcontent that Joseph had a double portion among them.

*Reason* 1. Because they must think they discern better of their own estate, and what they are able to afford every one out of the stock while they live, and they maintain an honest and comely state as before, and at their deaths, how that they have gathered will part itself to them, so some portion be for God, good uses, and other thing necessary.

*Reason* 2. Because the father best knows them, and with less partiality than themselves, who hath been to him the best child, and who have more grace in them, according to which he may deal and dispose; as did Isaac to Jacob, Jacob to Joseph, a double portion, all the other tainted with some gross sin; for their goods they may and ought to dispose of according to grace and virtue, which makes the youngest the eldest; and so *è contra*.

*Reason* 3. Because they are able best to discern who is like to do more good to church and commonwealth, and see in some one more hope than in another; and if he so dispose, they must be content.

*Use* 1. To reprove all discontented children, not content with the portion the father hath set out for them, neither living nor dead, but murmuring at the dealing of his father, as if his were less, the other too much, as the prodigal son's elder brother, or as Adonijah, making choice of his own portion; and if they have not the allowance they would have, they think they may come by it as they can, and whatsoever they get from their father they think it well gotten, and but of their own, and no sin. But see what the Holy Ghost saith: Prov. xxviii. 24, 'Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith it is no transgression, the same is a companion of a destroyer;' making such a son a companion and cousin german to a murderer. At his death, and in his sickness, if either they be privy to his will, or guess by his affection in his health that that will not fall to their portion, they desire to help to shorten his days and hasten his end. He shall hear news that they have shared for themselves, as Adonijah. After his death, many a son shews himself graceless, telling abroad everywhere how unkindly his

father dealt with him, that his portion was so small, not remembering in the course of common society, *de absentibus et mortuis nil nisi bonum*, much more for parents, whose infirmities must be covered being living, more dead; neither remembering how little they deserved at their father's hands, or how unkindly they used him in respect of others, or how little hope they gave him that they would use that well he should leave them, and by it be profitable to God or man, church or commonwealth.

*Use* 2. To teach every child to be content with the portion his father sets out for him, living or dead, whether more or less, equal or inferior to others; imputing somewhat, and not a little, to his father's wisdom, knowing his own ability, seeing their present graces or their future hopes; somewhat looking at home, how dutiful he hath been in comparison of others, how little deserving, what little grace, and so less goods. And if his father seem not to have dealt so equally, yet it is his duty to suspect his own wisdom rather than his father's, to accuse his own demerits, yea, to cover it in every place, and every way shewing himself contented. If Jacob see good cause to disinherit Reuben, and to pass by Simeon and Levi, and leave the lordship to Judah's hand, yea, if he shall skip over Dan and Ashur and the rest till he come to Joseph, from the eldest of all to the youngest, or state one, and bestow the double portion on him and his, the rest must not be discontented with his distribution, but give him leave to do with his own as he list, honouring him thus, yea, and using his portion left thee for his honour for increase and advantage, as the talents, that the world may judge of the justice and uprightness of thy father's getting of his goods.

The fourth thing in this submission is, to be disposed of for their marriages and matching.

*Doct.* It is the duty of children to submit themselves to their parents in their matches and marriages; to be given and taken in marriages. This is a part of their honour, for the Scripture gives this authority to the parents to bestow them, as is proved, Deut. vii. 3, 1 Cor. vii. 38, yea, to break them, Exod. xxii. 16, 17; then must they and ought to be subject. Besides the examples of all good children who have thus submitted themselves; and *exempla sanctorum pro regulis sunt, ubi deest regula, vel contraria non datur;* Isaac submitted to Abraham, Gen. xxiv 3; Jacob to Isaac, Gen. xxviii. 1, 2; Samson to his parents, Judges xiv. 1; Rachel and Leah to their father Laban, Gen. xxix. 19; yea, even profane and wicked have in some sort done it: Ishmael, Gen. xxi. 21; Shechem, Hamor's son, Gen. xxxiv 3–6.

*Reason* 1. Because this is to honour them, when they think them wiser and better able to provide for them than themselves; whose advice if they must submit themselves to for their calling and portion, more for this, when they are led commonly by the heat of affection to the liking of the person only, when there are many other things as necessary to concur as that, as religion, honesty of kindred, good report, equality, and such like; all which is rarely found in youth to be so duly respected, as parents by their experience respect, and are able to discern.

*Reason* 2. Because he may not dispose of the goods of his father without him, not sell his land or alienate anything from him, but as he will dispose, how then himself?

*Use* 1. This reproveth those children that dispose themselves without their parents' consent, prey upon their right, entangle and contract themselves, yea, and consummate marriages, they not witting, yea, unwilling, or by some necessity forced to shew some willingness, which is the cause of so many untoward, unclean, and polluted families, and profane succession, as other times can witness, so too many precedents in our days. For as when children are compelled to match against their wills, and where they have just occasion of exception, for some sinister respect the parents have, there follows much uncleanness and impiety; so when without the parents' consent, and not of their providing, but they are their own choosers; shewing where parents' consent is wanting, there God's blessing is away; yea, where parents' consent is not, there is God's curse, as in Esau and his posterity, in Judah taking his host's daughter, Gen. xxxviii. 2, having Er and Onan, such as God would not endure to live, but slew them himself. Yea, that may also be seen, Gen. vi. 2, in the sons of Seth, the church which, matched with cursed Cain's seed of themselves, without parent's consent, had such a wretched posterity. This thing then is reproof-worthy, yea, damnable in children without repentance. Parents are often causes of it, and that, first, to some it is God's retribution, because they so served and abused their parents; secondly, because they give such liberty to their daughters to wander, as Dinah; and so Ezek. xxiii. 3, their breasts come to be pressed, and the teats of their virginity bruised; or else their affections by often meeting are so entangled and inflamed, as the father's threats will not loose it, nor the mother's tears cannot quench it. It was not so, Prov. xxx. 18, 19, it should not be so. Jerome to Demetr., Epist. viii. 2, would not have virgins alone, *solæ sine matre;* for in a flock of doves the kite often will prey upon one when they are abroad; and it is a scabbed sheep that loves wandering, and leaves the fold.

Thirdly, Because parents do not take and use their right, and provide for them in due time mates fit for them, which makes them provide for themselves, not without sin, but greatly sinning; yet the partakers of it, and oftentimes of much shame and grief, as it was with Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 26. But howsoever, one man's sin cannot excuse another, nor yet the parents the child's sin, nor will not exempt them from the curse of God, when they thus match to the grief of their parents, and the shortening of their days and

life, by whom they received life, and should have their lives continued and lengthened.

*Use* 2. To instruct children to be subject to their parents, knowing what power they have over them to guide their choice, that without them they may not choose; and if they choose for them, they cannot without great cause and just exception stray themselves from liking. Smaller things they must endeavour to overcome: they must not suffer themselves to be entangled by some who seek by kind usage of them to steal away their hearts from their parents, for their daughters, to advance them, as is the manner of some wretched and unconscionable men. As usurers get their fathers' inheritance from them by feeding them with money, so they must not set their affections by fervency of society and company upon others, without parents, and where never like to give allowance. They ought to remember this is the father's right, to choose, to dispose of them, not only in the general, but for the particular person. But what if he be far off, and cannot see? If he give thee liberty, duly asking it of him, he hath given his right from himself, as Isaac to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. But what if he, upon some sinister respect, defer and pass the flower of her age? I answer, then hath God ordained the magistrate, as for their punishment, so for their relief, who is not to be sought to but when most urgent necessity requireth, when the opposition stands betwixt marriage and burning, because that reveals the father's fault, and bewrays his or her infirmity. But what if he tender a match out of the church, a papist, or such like? Then must the child refuse with reverence, not disposing of himself; for as it were sin to yield, so the other is sin to make choice of himself. But what if another, that is not so religious and so fervent a lover of the truth as is to be wished? No direct denial is lawful, but a wise delaying and a discreet gaining of time to solicit God with their prayers, who hath the heart of their parents in his hand, and to entreat them by mediation of best friends, who, if they can be diverted, it is well; if not, I know no warrant a child hath to deny his father's choice (though he think, and it may be he might choose better), and he may look for a blessing from God, if in duty he thus submit himself to his parents.

The last part of this honour is thankfulness, which children must perform to their parents.

*Doct.* Children must perform all thankfulness unto their parents; that is, help them when they need, and in age, when their state and bodies are decayed; and to be eyes, and legs, and limbs unto them, and to administer liberally according to their state and ability to them, as they did to them when they were young, and when yet they had nothing, nor knew not how to get anything. That this is a part of honour Christ sheweth, Mat. xv. 4–6; some think that of Ps. cxxviii. 3, when children are made olive plants; not olives only, and olive branches, which was a sign of peace, so they to make peace and love betwixt their parents, but plants, such as might stand under them, underprop and uphold them in their weakness. And thus verily have good children honoured their parents. So did the sons of Jacob, Gen. xlii. 1, 2; so did Joseph, Gen. xlvii. 12; so did Ruth, though but a daughter-in-law. To this purpose Paul forbids that the church should be burdened with widows, but their children and nephews ought to maintain them, 1 Tim. v. 4.

*Reason* 1. Because else he should not only be unnatural, but unjust, when the father by his special care for him, and the mother by her prayers, bearing and carrying of him, watching with him, lending eyes, and legs, and limbs to him, feeding and nourishing of him, deserveth it. All which they the better deserve, if they have children, with whom they have the like labour and endeavour. Now justice requires to pay debt due and deserved.

*Reason* 2. Because they had form from them, as body, and members, and limbs, so their education, their trade, their stock and portion, or both, whereby they are that they are, by the blessing of God. Reason then, they relieve and maintain them by it, if their need require.

*Use* 1. This reproves many graceless children, who never perform any such duty unto their parents, specially if they stand in need of them indeed; but if they be base and poor, will hardly acknowledge them, as thinking it their reproach and shame, not forgetting but disdaining the rock whereout they were hewed, the pit whereout they were taken, or if they do relieve them or be kind unto them, it is either because they have yet somewhat to give and bestow, which, till it be gotten, they use them kindly; yea, if many children, they strive which should shew most kindness; but once gotten, made over to them, they set them light and turn them out, some making their parents complain to authority against them; or if they keep them, decayed, they make them drudge as servants, they set them with the hinds, some so graceless as they complain they are a burden unto them, the best of them never tendering them as they did them, nor maintaining them as they are able, neither answerable to their former condition nor their own present, and some driving them away, and not affording any entertainment of release. To these and such like we apply that of Solomon, Prov. xix. 26, 'He that wasteth his father and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.' And so esteem of them, as God hath marked them.

*Use* 1. To teach children to perform all thankfulness to their parents, if they live to be able, and they to stand in need of them. If they be never so base, be not ashamed of them; but remember the time was, when thou wast naked and needy, and not only had nothing, but if thou hadst had all the world, couldst not have had help, but by them, or some instead of them. And yet they covered thy nakedness, were not

ashamed of thy infirmities, carried thee in their arms, and nourished thee carefully. Suppose and consider where thou hadst been, if they had neglected thee. Think how many nights without sleep, and days without rest, they spent about thee. When thou wast young, or weak, or sick, see how love made all their labour light, and all their charges as it were a gain unto them. And if thou hast any true natural affection in thee, thou wilt think nothing too much for them; but feed and nourish them at thy table, with thy morsel and cup; carry and sustain them in their weakness and infirmity; yea, though they should live as long, or longer, in infirmities and wants than thou wast of them. There are some birds, saith Basil, who feed their dams as long as they fed them and carried them; how much more Christian children! Oftentimes when thy father is dead, his garment or his ring is dear to thee; this thou carriest upon thy finger, and wouldst not lose it for anything; think how should his body, when he is living (*S. Aug. de Civ. D.* lib. i.). Or if thou see others so esteem them, apply it to thyself, and give them their whole honour; or else look for the shortening of thy days, and for the like recompence from thine.

*His Father.* Having seen the duty, we must proceed now to the parties to whom this duty and honour is to be performed: to the father and parents, as their parents, authors of their being, or at least instruments of their being, God being principal.

*Doct.* Children must perform all these duties, this honour, to their parents, all their life long. Nothing will free them from them, nor dispense with the neglect and omission: no greatness nor excellency themselves may come to, no state nor condition of theirs, neither want, infirmity, and imperfection of theirs. This is manifest by the example of Joseph, the second in the kingdom of Egypt, yet did not omit the least duty to his father, but performed all in their places: obedience, subjection, maintenance, reverence, in his infirmity and weakness and his own greatness, Gen. xlviii. 12; Solomon to his mother, 1 Kings ii. 19, 20; Christ to his parents, Luke ii. 51. Hence came the curse upon Ham, pronounced by his father, and executed by God, notwithstanding what he had to say and could hold out for his defence. His father was drunk and like a beast, Gen. ix.; but Shem and Japhet blessed, who did him reverence. To this purpose is that of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 22: 'Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.' Howsoever unworthy of it, yet thou must perform it, even to thy mother, weaker by nature, subject to more infirmities, by so much more apt to despise them; more then, when the infirmity of their sex and the imperfections of the age are combined together; yet we have no liberty to despise or deny duty.

*Reason* 1. Because neither the greatness of the one, nor the weakness and infirmity of the other, can break that relation which is betwixt child and parents, which the law of God, being moral, hath made perpetual unto everlasting. And the reason of this is, because, as Chrysostom in Rom. xiii., *non principi sed principatui*, that honour, obedience, and subjection, is required not so much to the prince, as to the princedom; not to the person, as to his place. So of this, the honour is due not to the father, but his fatherhood; not so much to the person of him as he is a man, and so either a bad or a good man, as to his place and office, as he is a father. Now he is a father, she a mother; though of never so bad life or bad parts, and so to be honoured. And the child is to give it, not as a man, and so great or base, high or low, but as a child, which ever is, and so must always perform it.

*Reason* 2. Because they are the authors, or principal instruments of their lives, essence, and being, which is that which never can be blotted out, but will ever remain while they are; therefore is this to be performed. It is Solomon's ground, Prov. xxiii. 22.

*Use* 1. This serves to condemn the Church of Rome, and their odious and impious positions, where they allow, by doctrine, the child to disobey his parents; for they allow him not so much as to acknowledge him to be his father, if he be an heretic, if a protestant; yea, by the heresy of the father, children are freed from all obedience, and the father deprived of all his natural power. (*Symancha Justit. Cathol.* tit. iv. sect. 74.) See ye not these men going against the current of humanity, and against the light of nature, and are opposite to the light of the word? Ham may not dishonour his father though he be drunk, but he shall have the curse; how shall they escape it? But heresy is a greater sin than drunkenness. Undoubtedly not, as they count heresy, which is to differ from the Church of Rome in anything, specially in matter of the seven sacraments. And what is this in comparison of that which makes a man a beast, which is worse, saith Saint Chrysostom, than to be a beast, because *istud naturæ, illud culpæ est*, which some small difference from them cannot make. But say it were greater, yet doth it not therefore dissolve the knot, or relation betwixt them, for it is not in the greatness of the sin, but when such a sin can be given that doth break the relation; for instance, idolatry is a greater sin than adultery, yet this, not that, breaks and dissolves marriage; because that, not this, meets in cominterposition with the knot of marriage, in that they being and becoming one flesh with another, 1 Cor. vi. 10, and so cutteth himself from her he was knit to before. In this they are only one spirit with an idol, and cease to be one spirit with the Lord. So this, it is not heresy for his greatness that can dissolve this natural bond, which is perpetual; for it cannot make that he had not his essence and being from his father, and the duty depending upon this, 'obey thy father that begat thee.' Hath he begotten thee? It is no matter what he is, thou must

honour him. Then impious are their positions; but no marvel if they teach rebellions, and disobedience, and murdering of prince, if they allow dishonouring of parents.

*Use* 2. To teach every child to perform this, honour his parents, whatsoever he is, whatsoever they are. Art thou higher, and richer, and wiser than they? Yet must thou do them honour; and by it shalt thou have these the more. Look upon Joseph, Solomon, and Christ, and nothing can be in thee that can give thee freedom from it, when they did it; the two first *ex debito*, Christ *ex placito*, to fulfil all righteousness, and give us example. Though then thou be married or advanced, or howsoever, yet still they are thy parents, and thou must not deny, but perform honour unto them; for thou hadst thy being from them, and till that be dissolved, thou owest them still the duties, the bonds remaining. Yea, whatsoever infirmity is in them, no sin dissolveth the bond, it makes not an annullity of the duty; for as gold is gold, though it be smeared over with dirt and filth, so are they thy parents, whatsoever their lives and manners be. Think with thyself, how their love made them bear with many natural infirmities of thy childhood, and not to neglect thee for the many untoward carriages of thy youth, and not to cast thee off from them. And think what duty now should bind thee unto. If they, for their perfect love, and upon some hope of comfort many years after, did pass over all, how much more thou in duty and in lieu* of thankfulness for that which thou enjoyest from them? Children must not be like flies (as Plutarch) which slip along the glass where it is smooth, but catch hold of it where there are any scratches or flaws; they must turn away their eyes from their infirmities, and forget their hard usage, if it have been any, and not be undutiful for that, because they have their being and education from them. Take heed of Ham's curse, and seek Shem's blessing, by not seeing their infirmities, but covering and performing duty to them; accounting it to be a sin to be repented of, when they cannot find their hearts so cheerful in their duties as they ought, because of their parents' infirmities.

*A servant his master.* The second rule of nature, the ground or other pillar of God's reason against this people. For the meaning, it is plain the duties here required are in the general the same for the most part with the former, though not in every particular. The first is reverence, and this both inward and outward; to join them together.

*Doct.* Servants must give all reverence unto their master, all inward good affection and estimation of them, and all reverent respect in gesture and speech, Eph. vi. 5; 1 Tim. vi. 1; Eccles. x. 20. It may be applied to masters, for the king is but a great master, and the master a little king. The outward in words, as not replying unreverently, Titus ii. 9; not speaking their infirmities to others, as 1 Sam. xxv. 17; giving them all reverent speech and submissive gesture, as 2 Kings v. 13; not despising them, as Hagar did Sarah.

*Reason* 1. Because God hath made them reverend, in that he hath communicated unto them part of his excellency and dignity, that is, his lordship and dominion, making them his vicegerents and lords over their family; therefore they ought to reverence them.

*Reason* 2. Because his commandments are spiritual, and reach to the inward man, and without it were all outward but hypocritical and counterfeit, which is abominable. And this without the outward is imperfect, if it may be supposed it may be without it, and so cannot be acceptable.

*Use* 1. This is to let servants see their sins past or present, when they have or do carry themselves unreverently towards their masters in heart and outward man, in eye and tongue, to their faces and behind their backs. They are all guilty of the breach of the decree of the Most High, and indeed all; for where shall we find a servant anything near performing the carriage he ought to his master and mistress? That he hath a base thought, opinion, and estimation of him, appears by his speech and carriage; his speeches so void of reverence, nay, his answers full of contempt, his eye and carriage so full of scorn and disdain. Hagar despising Sarah, looking scornfully upon her, which must needs argue unreverence in the heart, for by these things many a man well knows what is in the privy chamber of the heart, and by this outward pulse thus beating, may we discern how the inward parts are affected. For he that will speak so frowardly, and look so scornfully and doggedly, as many will, it must needs shew he hath no reverence, but his heart is full of despite and contempt; and he that will speak so to his face, and in his presence, what will he to others behind his back, and in his absence? Where is the fear and trembling Paul calls for? Where is all the honour Peter exacts, when ye will thus bourd them often, thus disdain them; when ye will answer them frowardly, or murmuring when their backs are turned; when you tell their weakness not to your fellows but to neighbours' servants, whereby their estimation is impaired. Think you the apostles call for these in vain, or shall such things go unpunished? Assuredly no; for when the apostle saith to servants, to encourage them that are good, Eph. vi. 7, 8, 'With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free;' did he not mean the contrary, and would have you to understand, that whatsoever evil thing a man doth, that shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free? So expect it in this particular; see then that, unreverent and contemptuous servants, expect you to receive from the Lord some fearful thing, and let it be a restraint in

* Qu. 'lien'?—ED.

you of such irreverence in the things spoken of, or the like. But of this sin masters are often the causes of it, and they that bring it upon themselves.

First, Because they have been such servants to their masters, and so have lived in it ever since without repentance; even then when God recompenseth them home, yet they will not remember their own sin, but are still brawling with their servants, and so it is God's just retribution; whereas, if they would repent of that they should better reform this: Eccles. vii. 21, 22, 'Take no heed to all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftimes also thy own heart knoweth that thou thyself hast also cursed others.' It may be applied to this, though it carry somewhat more: that a master, when his servant reviletb him, or useth him irreverently, should remember even this sentence to make him penitent and moderate.

Secondly, Because they have remitted of that ancient severity in their government, which we hear men, that can remember times that are past, speak of; not having those straight eyes, nor hard hands over them as they ought; not so sharply correcting them as the offence and nature of a servant requireth, so that they little reverence them, for they fear them not, because they forget that of Prov. xxix. 19, 'A servant will not be corrected by words, for though he understand, he will not answer.'

Thirdly, Because they bring them up too liberally for diet and apparel, and so, when the belly is full, and the back fine, the master is not so regarded. A servant is like in this thing to a horse full fed and pampered, he will cast his rider; like to Bucephalus, Alexander's horse: while he was bare-backed he would carry any man, but if once he had his trappings and furniture, none, or hardly Alexander himself. It is the complaint of many that servants are thus insolent to themselves and others. Many, though not all, are the causes of it themselves, somewhat there is in the nature of a servant and other things, for they bring them up so delicately, as Prov. xxix. 21, 'He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at the length.' Whatsoever their fare is, their apparel is far exceeding; a servant going better than a man of his master's place and wealth did some few years ago. And though they will not allow it themselves, yet they can be content, their friends or themselves, if their fortune be allotted unto them, should provide it for themselves. And if, when they are thus gay without, they use them as Hagar did her mistress, when she was big with child, is it not just with them? A great cause of this is taking of apprentices with great portions, and so as *mulier cum dote*, is *imperiosa*, so they and their friends. The cause you must have such portions with them, more than in former times, is this, because they must thus be maintained more than in former times. But better it were that you had less and kept them more meanly: better for you you should have more reverence and respect; better for them, for thus you bring sin upon them for the present, and in future time just contempt, as they have contemned you.

*Use* 2. To persuade servants to use their masters with all reverence and good respect that may be, they must fear them and reverence them. Nature itself hath taught it, and heathen servants hath performed it, as in Naaman's servants; how much more should religious Christian servants, and the more Christian or religious, the more they ought to perform this duty, not only not to contemn and despise, but to reverence them with all the reverent carriage and speech that may be; and that not outward only, but inward, for God requires more than nature. His law is spiritual, and he will have all inward and outward respect, the heart as well as the tongue; and the outward will not be, or not continue, or if so, yet not accepted of God. Yea, he that wants this, it can never be expected the other of obedience, &c.; and let him who looks and hopes to be one day a master, and to have his servants such as he would, be now such a servant as he should: Eph. vi. 8, 'Knowing that whatsoever good any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.'

The second duty of servants is obedience; for whom men fear, them they obey.

*Doct.* Servants must give unto their masters and governors all obedience; hence it follows, because they must fear; and whom men fear, them they obey when they command. This proved, Eph. vi. 5, Col. iii. 22, Titus ii. 9. And this obedience, if it be such as Christians ought to perform, it must neither be clipped nor counterfeit, not in some things only, nor in show to the eye: for the first, Col. iii. 21, 'in all things,' that is, in all lawful things, whether they be liking and tasting unto him, or otherwise, though never so disliking, for he must pleasure his master, Titus ii.; for the second, Eph. vi. 5, 6, Col. iii. 22. Singleness of heart is required, and eye-service forbidden.

*Reason* 1. Because they are bound either by indenture, or condition, &c., then they must obey.

*Reason* 2. Because they are maintained by them, and learn, and get that under them they may live by hereafter.

*Reason* 3. Because, if in only things they like they obey themselves, not masters, as in obedience of children.

*Reason* 4. Because in this obedience they serve God and Christ: Eph. vi. 5–7, who looks in the heart and singleness of it. And though outward and eye service may be for thy master, and may blear his eyes, yet not the Lord, who, as he cannot endure hypocrisy or imperfect serving immediately, so not in that which is mediate to man.

*Use* 1. To let servants see their sins past or present; not obeying and doing the things their masters command, but only such things as they please; and when they do, they clip their service and perform it by

halves, and do it in hypocrisy and to the eye, and so go no further than nature, who teacheth a man only to save himself as near as he can from any harm that may ensue when his master is displeased, or to seek to get somewhat, if he have hope of aught, by seeking of his favour, and so seeming willing to do any service unto him; but they must know that, as Bernard, *si in hoc obedimus, non autem in illo, fractus est nummus*, this obedience is like clipped coin, and will not pass for good payment before God. Though thy master let it pass, and be content to put it up, yet God will call thee one day to an account for it; and though thou canst keep it close from the one, yet thou canst not conceal it from the other. And as we see in money that is clipped, or a piece of gold that wants a little of its weight, makes it refused in payment, so the want of obedience in any one thing, unless thou repent thee in regard of God, and make amends to thy master for it, shall make God to refuse, and not to regard the rest of thy obedience, because he requires it to be whole and entire. Ay! but say thou doest all, yet it is in the eye, and in presence or sight, murmuring when he is gone, or regarding not: then saith Bernard, *falsus est nummus ejus, plumbum habet non argentum, dolosè agit sed in Dei conspectu.* This obedience is counterfeit; instead of silver, it is lead; he dealeth deceitfully with his master, but he doth it in God's sight, whose eyes no man can blear or beguile. Such servants, let them know, though they may have their masters' favour, because he can find no fault with them, and can see no further than their outward and open behaviour, yet they shall never have but God's dipleasure, that regardeth the heart more than the hand; the affection more than the action; and the manner of doing it more than the deed. So that they, when they have received their master's wages or his yearly allowance, or what other matter, of no great moment for the most part, he shall think good to bestow on them, they have, as Christ said of the Pharisees, who did all their works only to be seen of men, they have received all their reward, they have all they desired, and all they deserved; they can look for nothing at God's hands for the'r labour. And yet they shall have a reward from him without true repentance, *lege talionis;* such servants, who shall perform them such hollow, hypocritical, and eye service, if ever they come to be able to keep any; or if this fear them not, because they think they can hamper their servants well enough, and being privy to their own corruptions, they will provide for them; yet let them see what follows, they 'shall have their portion with hypocrites,' as Christ said of the bad servant, who played revels in his master's absence, Mat. xxiv. 51.

*Use* 2. This may persuade and instruct servants to obey their masters, and to obey as they ought, in things though disliking, though he do not oversee or can come to knowledge of, and perform whole and sincere obedience to them, knowing that to obey them is to obey the Lord, and *nummus iste obedientiæ, ut Deo debitus, ita Deo solvendus*, saith one. As thy master constraineth thee to obey him, so thy God hath commanded thee; and it must be paid and performed, not according to thy master's power, but according to God's precept; not so far as thy master can urge thee, but as far as God requireth of thee, and he is *sapiens nummularis, imò ipsa sapentia, cui necesse habemus reddere hunc mummum obedientiæ.* He can easily discern, if thy payment be anything faulty or wanting. Learn, then, to obey in all things; thy master's will and command must be thy rule and square of thy actions, and not thy own fancy or pleasure. Remember that of Paul, they must labour to please them in all things, Titus ii. 9. *Interest enim hoc*, saith Bernard, *inter conjugium et servitium*, that howsoever the wife is bound to obey the voice of her husband, yet he is likewise to have regard of her pleasure; therefore is that Gen. xxi. 12, 'And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice;' for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. But in this service there is not this *vicissitudo voluntatum* required, for that were to set master and man almost on equal terms. The master is not bound to regard his servant's mind, but he to observe his master's pleasure; and therefore though the master may be somewhat cross and crooked in his commandment, yet the servant's obedience is not straight in God's sight, when it swerveth from that which he requireth; he must, then, serve and obey in all things. And as thus, so not with eye-service, but as faithfully behind his back, as if he were present. That which Aristotle said should not only be true, *Oculus domini impinguat equum, vestigium domini impinguat agrum*, the master's eye makes a fat horse, and the master's footsteps a fertile field, as contenting themselves with eye-service, sight obedience. But Christians must learn that of Chrysostom, God is ἐργοδώκτης, an overseer of their works, and a rewarder of them, and so perform them as lawfully and exactly, when none is by to take notice of it, as to do them in the sight and presence of others. They that shall thus in conscience of God's will serve them, as if they served them* in their persons, though their masters reward them not, yet will God; and if they deal liberally with them, God's reward shall be never the less, because they serve the Lord Jesus, Eph. vi. 8. The servant shall have his reward, as well as any other in their place of obedience. Christ will make him his freeman, 1 Cor. vii. 22. God shall bless him with good servants, and obedience here, and make him partaker with the good servant hereafter, Mat. xxiv. 46, 47, that is, partaker of his kingdom.

But here may be moved the same doubts and questions, which were in the obedience of children. First, if God and my master command diverse things, whom

* Qu. 'him'?—ED.

must I obey? God; for the reasons before, and that of Christ: Mat. xxiii. 8, 'One is your Master, that is Christ;' that is, chief and principal, who must first and especially be served. But yet, thou that art a servant, take heed thou make not an opposition, when there is none, yet at least not in thy obedience, though there may be in his command, only to shift off his service, and to ease thyself, or for other sinister respect; for this know, that thou mayest do things at his command, which haply he commands not lawfully, and which thou couldst not do lawfully without his command. Instances will make the point more evident. For thee to withdraw thyself on the Lord's Sabbath from public exercises is unlawful; but thy master commands thee to stay at home, either whole or part of the day. I see not but thou mayest do it, and without sin. The master may command it without sin, if he dwell far from neighbours, as in the country, for the preservation of the things God hath given him; and if nigh unto neighbours, yet for his children, who either must be troublesome to the congregation, as too many are, and hinder many from hearing, or must be kept at home, which cannot be without danger, if some one of discretion be not with them. Here he may lawfully command, and thou lawfully obey, which thou couldst not do without; but he may do it unlawfully, when he hath no such occasion; yet thou must do it, and may, so he employ thee not about servile works on that day, and in that time. The reason is, because the Lord's day may be sanctified privately. And public exercises are not of absolute necessity in the sanctifying of it; for then prisoners and sick persons, and such as lie lame, should not be able to sanctify it. They only are of necessity when they can be had without apparent breach of some other commandments. And yet mayest thou make this unlawful to thee, when, if thou be left at home, thy master and mistress are gone to church, but thou art with a child in thy arms, or without gazing at the door, or gadding abroad, or having thy companions coming to thee, and spendest thy time profanely, when thou oughtest, so much as may be, to spend it in reading the word, meditating on that thou hast heard in the forenoon, or former time, or such like; and in this thou must take heed how thou settest God and thy master one against another. Another instance: thy master commands that is unlawful for him to bid, not for the thing, but his affection. Thou must obey, having first wisely and humbly sought to turn thy master from such a sin, as betwixt David and Joab's numbering of the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 2, 3. But the thing he commands is unlawful, as well as his affection, I mean not simply, but by circumstance or consequent; yet thou mayest obey, as being an officer's clerk to receive more fees than is due, being extortion, or a nobleman's bailiff his extreme rack rents, providing that in humility thou shew thy dislike of it, seek to reform it, or do it with sorrow and grief while thou art bound to it, and get thyself rid of such a service so soon as thou may. But if he command thee any thing simply that is sin, as to swear for his gain, to lie for his commodity, to deceive, to steal, or any such things, thou mayest not obey, and yet not rebel, but suffer.

*Quest.* 2. If the magistrate and my master command diverse thing, whether must I obey?

*Ans.* The magistrate, *ut supra*, and for the reasons there. Besides, if it carry not any excuse, neither is it any plea in law, My master bids me do it. It must needs follow that the magistrate must be obeyed. It would not excuse Absalom's servants, their master bade them kill Amnon, for which he was glad to flee, for the power of the master is but subordinate to the magistrate. Thy obedience, then, to thy master hath this restraint, because it cannot be lawful. But say the magistrate commands me that which doth marvellously redound to the hurt of my master, whose good am I bound to procure? If it be very profitable to the commonwealth, a public good must be preferred; if not prejudicial to it, so there be no contempt of the magistrate and his authority, he being content to bear the penalty, if it be executed and exacted from him, I see not but he may prefer his master before, as in the case of children, and instance of Esther.

*Quest.* 3. My master and my father are opposites, whether must I obey?

*Ans.* I answer as before in children; there is somewhat besides in those who are born servants, Exod. xxi. 4.

*Quest.* 4. My master and my husband, as the case may fall out in the meaner sort (who are to be instructed as others), or my state requires this of me, wife and children, but my master another.

*Ans.* I answer, his master. The master is to be obeyed, because he ought, Ps. xv. 4, 'not to change though he swore to his hurt.' The equity of it stands for any covenant; that must be preferred before his profit; and if before his own, then his wife's or husband's. For the man, see an example in Jacob, who would not labour for his own family, but obey his master, Gen. xxx. 30. For the woman, if she be a servant born, and given in marriage as the manner was, still she was to obey her master, Exod. xxi. 4. If she be a servant by covenant, and consent of her husband, during the time of her covenant, she is to obey and keep the conditions of the covenant, for he for the time hath remitted his authority.

The third duty of servants is submission, that is, to their reproof and corrections; for those men whom they fear, they will suffer both at their hands.

*Doct.* Servants must submit themselves unto their masters, to be controlled and corrected by them, whether they do it justly or unjustly, whether deservedly or not; they must fear them, and therefore suffer from them. When God allows the master to reprove and correct his servant, as he doth, Prov. xxix. 19, then it must imply that his servant must

suffer it: 1 Pet. ii. 19, 'For this is thankworthy, if a man, for conscience toward God, endure griefs, suffering wrongfully;' Tit. ii. 9, 'Not giving cross words one for another.' Hence is that, Gen. xvi. 9, 'And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.' The example of Abraham's servant is commendable, Gen. xvii. 23; his servants submitted to circumcision, and by proportion the example serves for this purpose.

*Reason* 1. Because, if it be for well-doing in conscience, it is thankworthy; and if it be borne with meekness, the Lord shall give a man the more reward, 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20.

*Reason* 2. Because they are called to this, 1 Pet. ii. 21. This is the cross that Christ hath called them to take up and bear after him; this is the cross that God hath annexed to their calling, as every calling hath some cross or other, and for the wrong that is offered them, God, as St Paul saith, Col. iii. 25, will right and revenge them, &c.

*Use* 1. To reprove many and most servants amongst us, who go not so far as nature itself would teach them, few so far as religion doth teach them; for some cannot so far subdue their crooked natures to submit themselves to their masters, so far as they can do, no otherwise, because it is in vain to struggle with the yoke when a man cannot slip it or shift it off. But if some come to this, yet can they hardly suffer with patience hard measure, though they suffer deservedly, whenas natural equity doth condemn him that doth otherwise.

And be it that some can thus subdue themselves, yet is it no more than the heathens and publicans will do; it is but *canina patientia*, a dog-like enduring, saith Bernard, such as God will not accept, when either he dare not whine, or hath done some foul fact and deserved it. But if they have not, or think they have not deserved it, how ready are their answers! How soon will they turn upon their masters, and take the rod by the end! And if they be rebuked, they murmur; if they be corrected, they either will resist, or clamorously complain, or wickedly seek revenge. Let these know and see their sin, and look for a recompence from the Lord; for, saith St Peter, they have lost their thanks, it is not thankworthy if they had suffered for evil. What, when they will not? Undoubtedly, let them look from God, which rewardeth every man. They shall have their recompence from him if they repent not; it may be in this life with the like (if not, in the life to come), with wicked and lewd servants. But of this sin, if we may inquire the causes of it, we shall find in many to come from the parents and friends, either in their education, bringing them up cockeringly, never using them to reproofs, to the rod, and to the yoke, but as my young masters and such as never should come to serve, so that, when they must to it, by no means they can apply themselves unto it, but in it endure and suffer nothing, not so much as sharp words, but no blows, deserved or not. But this is not all their fault, for it is seconded with as bad when they are in service, and find some hardness, and as they only think sharpness; they, remembering the fondness of their affection, complain to them, who do not, as they should, correct them soundly and send them home again, but go to their masters and expostulate the matter for them, extenuate the fact, aggravate the master's hard dealing, upbraid him with what he gave him with his friend or child, and so animate them that they will be in nothing sufferers after, or never without grudging and repining. Another cause is in the master, either because he was such, and is such, because he hath not repented, and so it is God's retribution, *ut ante;* or because he hath been too remiss to let faults many and little escape without reproof and correction, that when he would for greater he cannot subdue them; or passed by some greater faults in some other of his servants for some sinister respect, as because he would not be accounted cruel and severe, which in the justice of God and the cankered nature of another servant is paid him home, because he never feared to be accounted cruel of God, and such an one as hates his servant; for that will hold in servants, Prov. xiii. 24, 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes,' and so being ashamed in a licentious and corrupt age to be accounted hard and strait, he hath shame laid upon him by a rebellious servant, as we may apply Prov. xxix. 15, 'The rod and reproof giveth wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.' A third cause is in the magistrate to whom the master complains, as he may and must in a desperate cause, who by the servant's friends or means he makes to him, will either reprove and check the master, which he ought not to do, though there be some small cause, nor, if great cause, yet not before the friends or face of the servant, and little or not at all reprove or not severely correct that servant, by which not only he is made more bold against his master, but even other servants are animated against theirs, and the masters utterly discouraged to seek any help from them.

*Use* 2. To admonish all servants to subject and submit themselves unto their masters, to be reproved or corrected by them as well unjustly as justly, not answering crossly, or rejecting their stripes. If they suffer justly, it is not thankworthy for a Christian, when a natural man will do the same; for nature teacheth that it is no hard dealing when they suffer evil that have done evil before. Then, as Christ, 'except your righteousness exceed,' &c., so, except your subjection exceed that which a natural man will perform, you shall have no thank from God, no reward. How then must you exceed it, if not only this, but even when you are wrongfully afflicted, reproved, and chastised, in truth or in your apprehension of things, if for conscience' sake towards God you endure grief? 1 Peter

ii. 19. Obedience and patience are unsavoury unless God be the cause, and it be for conscience.*

But how far must we suffer? I answer, so long as he kills not, or dismembers not; but if wrongfully he be corrected, he may expostulate and defend himself in humility and meekness, his master giving him leave, as Job xxxi. 13.

The fourth duty of servants is faithfulness, for those whom men fear, to them are they faithful if they trust them with anything.

*Doct.* Servants must perform all faithfulness to their masters; that is, they must not themselves diminish or hinder their estate, neither suffer it, so much as possibly they can withstand, to be hindered by other, but by all means uphold, maintain, and increase it to the utmost of their power. This is manifest: Titus ii. 10, 'Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' Where, as faithfulness is expressly required, so the contrary is forbidden, and manifested wherein that doth consist by the contrary, in maintaining and not diminishing his master's state and condition. This Christ teacheth by the faithful and evil servant, Mat. xxiv. 45, 48, &c.; as also in the parable of the worldly-wise but wicked steward, Luke xvi. 2. Thus Jacob played a good servant, Gen. xxxi. 38, 39; in this he was a good servant, though faulty; 1 Sam. xxv. 14, 15, 17; Joab also, 1 Chron. xxi. 3.

*Reason* 1. Because the commandment requires it of every man, one to another in common justice. Thou shalt not steal, not diminish another man's substance; nay, maintain and increase it, in the affirmative, then much more a servant.

*Reason* 2. Because the master's family is as a little commonwealth, as that is a great family. Now as all subjects are members, and ought to labour for the common good, and be faithful to the prince, so every servant is a member, and must be faithful unto the whole body.

*Reason* 3. Because they are put in trust often with part or his whole state. Where there is trust, treachery is intolerable.

*Reason* 4. Because by this means they shall adorn the doctrine of Christ which they profess, Titus ii. 10.

*Use* 2. To let servants see their sins, that they have not been faithful, but unfaithful to their masters. Unfaithful, *first*, by hindering his profit and diminishing his state; either spending his master's goods riotously at home with his fellow-servants, as he, Mat. xxiv.; or abroad, as the prodigal son, upon harlots and wicked persons, playing and dancing, drinking and dicing, and such like. The former of servants accounted no sin, the latter but a small sin; and yet neither of them inferior to robbery by the highway, and in divers circumstances greater. And such a sin, without recompence to his master, and repentance in the sight of God, shall have his just recompence from God, and shall never be forgiven him; for if he that deceives another, or defrauds and oppresseth him, shall not escape, he less that deals so with his master.* But say he spends it not, but convert it to his own use, and enrich himself by it, he is more bound to make restitution, or let him suspect that of Augustine shall be true:† The sin is not pardoned unless the theft be restored; and as long as he keeps it, he keeps God's curse with it, prosper he never so well for a while; and if he leave it to his, that it will be a spark to burn up his house and substance in his sight; he shall leave the curse of God with it to his wife and children, when he is burning in hell for it and other sins. Yet if many be free from this kind of unfaithfulness, yet how few can wash their hands from the other, not upholding and increasing their master's state and condition. The apostle forbade not only stealing and pilfering, but commands all good faithfulness, that they by all means possible should increase it by all their diligence, skill, and speech. Whenas they have been slothful and negligent, when they have by their carelessness lost their master somewhat which might honestly have been had, or not prevented some loss by their wisdom and forecast if they saw it coming; yea, when they have murmured to break their sleeps or mend their pace, to bear the heat in the day, and the frost in the night, for their master's special advantage and honest gain, they have not performed this faithfulness in all these things. Look upon your reckonings, your guilty consciences, and know you that if God will recompense your wrong to your master, Col. iii. 25, he will much more recompense you for them if you repent not. Now the cause of this unfaithfulness (to say nothing of God's retribution and servants' corrupt hearts) is to be found in some, because they do not take strait accounts of their servants, but do it negligently or seldom, by which he is emboldened to spend, or enabled to shift, when his account is to be given.

*Secondly*, In others, because they pass over apparent unfaithfulness in some of their servants without due correction and punishment, and so other of their fellows and themselves are heartened to the like, when they have no fear of God, nor feel nothing from their masters after their deserts.

*Thirdly*, From parents, that allowed them to spend, and brought them up idly, before ever they bound them; and from many a master, who would be content his eldest servant should keep good fellowship and company, and spend of his own, to bring them cus-

* Insipida et insalsa omnis tum obedientia, tum patientia, nisi omnium quæ agimus vel patimur ipse sit causa.—*Bernard.*

* Many for the sickness-times have in God's rolls long records against them, yea, great indictments they must plead guilty to, for which some of their fellows have answered already.

† Non remittitur peccatum nisi restituitur ablatum.—*August.*

tomers, by which the rest have their teeth set on edge in their corruptions; and God's hand is against them to punish them by others, when they had no care of the former.

*Fourthly*, Because they had no care to take such servants as are religious and towardly, and such as know how to be faithful; nor yet to teach them any religion when they have them, that they might learn to be faithful of conscience, and not for other sinister respect; and so when they have no care, with Abraham, to teach their servants to be faithful with God, no marvel though they be unfaithful to them, in their states, bodies, children, and in all things.

*Use* 3. This may instruct and persuade servants to perform faithfulness to their masters for the time to come, and to repent, make them recompense for that is past, if they see their sin; if in mis-spending their master's goods at home or abroad, if by negligence losing him commodity, or by hindering of it, or for want of diligence not advancing it, sorrow and mourn for that is past, as it is a sin against God and man, and make thy master amends by a double care and diligence in thy service, else make account that thy sin stands upon the score against thee for a judgment to come. And if thy unfaithfulness hath been so great, that thou hast appropriated his goods unto thyself, look (whether thou be in his service or out) that thou make him recompense, and give him his own again; make him restitution, or else all shall not be accepted of God while thou hast his goods in thy hand; look how may pence or pounds, so many witnesses against thee; yea, so many as call for a curse upon the rest of thy substance, thou either hast, or may have. And for other servants, let, if not conscience restrain them, yet this, that thou must make restitution, or never have remission before God; besides, the guilt and gall of thy conscience, if thou go not asleep to hell. Finally, let servants in all things shew all good faithfulness, specially such as have any taste of religion, that you may adorn the doctrine of Christ; that you make not the wicked scoff at your profession, and the good justly tax you of hypocrisy, Chrysostom, *Hom.* 16 *in Tim.*, hath these words; If not otherwise, yet as servants obey and respect their masters, so let us the Lord. They expose their lives for their ease, it is their work and study to care for their masters; the things of their master they care for all the day, but a little part for their own. Would God we could thus exhort upon as good ground and true, sure it is, and so it should be; and thus faithful should every one be, and if you be, look for God's blessing by like servants, and a reward hereafter with the good servants, if you be such of conscience, and for the Lord.

*His master.* As we have seen the duty and fear, so we must see the parties to whom it is due to be performed. To their master, whatsoever he may be, so he be their master, it skills not, to him must they perform it.

*Doct.* Servants must give this fear, and perform all these duties to him that is their master; be he what he may be, or let them be what they can be, yet while they are servants, and they masters, they must perform it; say he be in birth, in parts, in graces, in religion, inferior to them, say he be cruel and churlish, a very Nabal, say he be profane and irreligious, an atheist or heretic, yet they must fear, and in fear perform these duties to them. This is that the apostle speaketh, 1 Peter ii. 18, and 1 Tim. vi. 1. To what servants speaketh the apostle? To such as did believe, and were come to the knowledge of the truth. Of what masters? Such as yet were enemies to God and his truth, loved not, knew not, had not tasted of the truth. Laban was an idolater, yet did Jacob give him faithful service, and all duty; yea, a churlish and deceitful unconscionable master. Potiphar was an heathen, yet Joseph feared him, and served him faithfully. The prophet never forbade Naaman his service to his master, after he was become a Jew, that is, a servant of God, 2 Kings v. 23. Here too may we apply that, 1 Cor. vii. 20–22,* not to deny service, but to alter the manner of service; before for fear of masters' displeasure, now for conscience of God's command; before their masters only, now Christ in their master.

*Reason* 1. Because (as was noted in children out of Chrysostom), it is due to their place, not person; as *Non principi, sed principatui*, so *Non magistro, sed magisterio.* The fear is due, not to his person, and so, good or bad, high or low, gentle or churlish, but to his place and authority, as a master, which he may be, of what quality or condition soever he be, and from them as servants, whatsoever their persons, and quality, and gifts may be.

*Reason* 2. Particularly for such as are religious, that they bring not dishonour upon God's name and doctrine, 1 Tim. vi. 1, but may honour him.

*Reason* 3. For both, because it shall be more respected of God, the less it is deserved by anything in thy master, for then it is done of conscience, and for God, as a good work ought to be.

*Use* 1. This will condemn the doctrine of the Church of Rome, howsoever bragging itself to be apostolical, yet holds it but few of the apostles' doctrines, which it hath not either corrupted, or taught something to the contrary. And in this point most directly to Peter and Paul, forbidding fear and faithfulness to be performed of servants to their masters, and them who put them in trust. Symacha saith, *Instit. Cathol. Tit.* 46, *sect.* 74, that all keepers of forts, and all other vassals and slaves, are freed from the oath of subjection to their lord and master, he being an heretic, affirming that by it, he is deprived of his civil power he hath over his servants; the ground of the unfaithfulness of Sir William Stanley in yielding up Daventer, an act approved and commended by Cardinal Allen.

* He speaks to those who are free, not to bind themselves to such.

How unlike are these spirits to the spirit of St Peter and St Paul, who will have faithfulness to the good and bad, to the infidel as well as the believer; shall not that be verified of them? Mat v. 19. But they will say, heresy is a greater sin than infidelity; first, I answer, not as they make heresy, *ut ante:* secondly, be that true of Augustine: *Sanata vulnere infidelitatis, sed gravius percussa vulnere idololatriæ;* yet all heresy is not idolatry, neither can this, if it be, destroy the knot and bond of this duty, which is not faith nor the foundation of divine religion, but a politic title, having force and strength from the law of nature, which is not to be dissolved by heresy, not contrary to it. And the apostle's reason will be here, as well as in infidelity, it will make the name of God and his doctrine ill spoken of. But the truth is, this is but a shift of theirs, for they teach no faith to be kept with such, and so no faithfulness with such as are heathen or infidels. If we may gather the less from the greater, Vladislaus (he was, I take it, the king of Hungary and Poland), in a battle against the Turks, had the better hand, so that the Turk* offered to yield to any conditions, whereupon, Vladislaus and the Turk swore to articles of agreement; but presently a legate came from the Pope,† and urged Vladislaus to set upon the Turk again, near vanquished already, telling him that the Pope had power to dispense with his oath, which he attempted, though sore against his will. Then the Turk cried out, *O crucifixe, crucifixe, vide gentem tuam perfidam:* O thou crucified, thou crucified, take notice of thy treacherous people; and so bestirred himself, that he overthrew Vladislaus, which hath ever since turned to the greatest detriment of all Christendom. Out of this, by proportion, we may see it is but a colour of their distinction of heresy and infidelity.

*Use* 2. To reprove all such servants as think they owe no fear nor duty, or less fear and duty to their masters, because of some defects in them, or some excellency in themselves: if he be base born, and they of worshipful parents; if he be irreligious, and they have somewhat or more taste of piety; if he be poor, so when they came to him, or impoverished after, &c. But they must know that none of these will dispense with omission of any duty. Is he their master? If they give him not all respect, they sin against his place and dominion; and so against God, that hath given it him. If God had allowed only rich men, or religious men, or good and courteous men, to be his vicegerents in the family, then it were somewhat; but he hath given this to the rich and the poor alike, he hath lightened both their eyes, the good and the bad hath the seal of the commission alike; therefore they who do not alike reverence their masters, one as other, are guilty of sin before God, and shall have no reward from God, because he doth it not in conscience to God's commandment, but for sinister respect, for which they may receive their reward from men, but a heavy one from God.

*Use* 3. To persuade servants to fear and do all duty to their masters, whatsoever they are, one or other. He that is well born must forget his father and his father's house, and look not upon his master whence he came, but what he is; he that is religious, remember he must adorn his profession, and look not upon his master what he is of himself, corrupt and profane, but what God hath made him, his own vicegerent, and his master; and think what unworthiness soever be in thy master, yet that thou art most unworthy to do him any disgrace, or to deny him any duty. Remember that what is due to him, it is not to his person, but place; indeed not to him, but God, and to him in God's stead; and the more unworthy he is of any duty, the more readily thou performest it, the more reward thou shalt have from God; yea, for the present it is a special proof of true grace in the heart; for as it is Rom. v. 7, 8, so every one will obey a great and a good master. But that is true obedience when the master is neither great nor good; or great, and not good; or good, and not great; for so have good servants and holy men done in times past unto their masters.

*If I be a father, where is my honour?* Here is the application of the former ground and rule to himself and them; not speaking in general, but applying it particularly, teaching in his example what is the best and most profitable kind of preaching, when application is joined with doctrine. *Vide* Heb. xii. 1.

*If I be a father.* Here is first the fatherhood of God to be considered, and so he is in two respects: of his creation and election. Out of both we have somewhat to learn.

*Doct.* Men in regard of their creation being so the sons of God, ought to honour him, and do him service and obedience; thus much the Lord's reasoning imports and enforceth. It is manifest also by that: Deut. xxxii. 6, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?' Thus much David prayed: Ps. cxix. 73, 'Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me, give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.' This shews he ought to pay so much to God.

*Reason* 1. Because by all laws, human and divine, of God, nature, and nations, a man owes as much as he hath received, and ought to repay it as it is due, and is called for. Therefore owes a man all he hath unto God, and ought to pay it to the service of his Creator, unless he will be accounted a thief, and an ungrateful man to him who hath bestowed so great things upon him; for he hath received from him his being, that is, his body, with all his senses, and his soul, with all the powers of it: then is he debtor to pay all these.

* Amurath, the second of that name. † Eugenius IV.

*Reason* 2. Because, as nothing else, so man is not born with all perfections; he hath many things perfect, but many things wanting, which must be perfected afterwards. Now it is a rule that he must give the complement and perfection who hath begun the work or given the beginning; therefore it is that every effect looks to the cause, to receive from it his last perfection. The trees search for the sun, and stretch their roots into the earth which brought them forth. Fishes also will not out of the waters which bred them. The chicken no sooner out of the shell, but shrouds itself under the feathers of the hen, and follows whithersoever she goes. The little lamb, after it is born, seeketh to the dam's teat, and if there be a thousand sheep of the same wool and colour, it knows the own dam, and will follow her whithersoever she goes; as if she said, Here I received that I have, and here I seek for that I want. Then ought reasonable man not to do less than unreasonable creatures, but being not perfect, seek to him, and serve him that made him, that he may receive perfections.

*Use* 1. This will serve to confute the dream of libertines and Valentinians (of which not a few in our days), who have the name of Christians, but not the thing, who think that the gospel and Christ being come, men are not bound to obedience as before. Whether the gospel bind or no, that will follow after in the next point, for this that men are still bound, and by the law, for all the gospel to obey, appears plainly, because the reasons are the same to us now which were then to them. Receive they not now all their bodies and souls, all the members and parts, all the faculties and powers of them, from him? and as they have those beginnings, must they not have the proceedings also and perfections from him? If any have not, let him go out free, he is bound to no such thing; but if all men have, then is every one bound, even by the law, now in time of the gospel, as before. God's reason stands thus now, If I be a father, if I have made thee, and created thee, honour me; if thou hadst that thou hast elsewhere, I challenge it not; if thou canst have anything from others without me to perfect thy defects and supply thy wants, I challenge no such thing; but if not, then give me my honour. Know thus much, that the law requires honour to God as a father in regard of creation, which, if it be a continual work of God for all times, and to all men, then it follows that now as then.

*Use* 2. To teach men, and every one, if there be no other reason, that this requires of all obedience and honour to God, because they are his; he their father that made them. For if a man build the house, whose turn must it serve but the lord's that built it? If he plant a vineyard, who shall gather the grapes but he that planted it? If a father beget a son, whom shall he rather serve and honour than his father which begat him? And if this, then how much more to him that is the Father of fathers, and of all things in earth and heaven? It is heard from many men when they reprove others for some dishonouring of God, and often but as they think. It is not for your profession. Doth it become a man of that zeal you make show of, professing so greatly as you do? If they speak it that they are more bound, it is true; but if that they themselves are not bound, and more than they can perform, it is false; for wherein have they dishonoured God by the profession that thy creation binds not thee to do or from doing? Set faith and repentance aside, things invisible not commanded in the law, what is it thou art not bound to, either for piety or honesty; and that by the creation? For the law holds fast there, and creation only binds to all such duties. For even as the heathen man* saith, A man can never return so much to his father as he ought; how can he to God, who hath given us more than all the fathers in the world? And, if to dishonour a father be a vile crime in a son, what is it to sin and rebel against God, who is father so many ways? Let every man then bethink himself of this, and see in himself how many things he hath to move him to honour God, though he never look without himself; body, soul, all the faculties, and powers, and parts of both, because his hands made them. And if the axe may not boast itself against him that heweth with it, Isa. x. 15, how may it against him that made it? How may man dishonour his Creator? If not the axe against the hewer, how the heart against the master? Shall those hands made by him, those eyes enlightened by him, that tongue made, and made speaking by him, dishonour, provoke, and revile with oaths and blasphemies? If they do, know that as all things are possible with him, and like easy to him, he can destroy them as easily as he made them; in a word, both. Oh, then, let those hands work the works of God, let those feet walk the paths of God, those eyes delight in the ways of God, and that tongue speak the praises of God, and that whole man honour him that hath made it; for thus he calls, 'If I be a father, where is my honour?' If I have made you, where is the service you do me? Amongst men a chapman of credit pays as much as he received, and he would scorn not to be accounted a good paymaster; and yet such deal nothing so currently with God, neither when we look for so much from God. Man will not give God so much, give him ourselves, and that we have received; one will give him his heart, another his body, not his heart; another will part both with him, as if he created not both as one, as if his title be not as great to one as to another, or to the whole as to part. He is the Father of our spirits and the Father of our bodies. Or if thou wilt give one, and not the other, thou condemnest thyself by the one for withholding the other; for his right is in this respect to both, and must have both, and be honoured in the whole. But why pay they as much because they would receive

* Aristotle.

more, and have not yet enough? So in this no man is perfect, though he have received much. And why hath not God made him perfect? Verily it was, as one said, not because he was covetous and niggard, but because he was loving and bountiful, knowing that it was good for him to be such an one; not that he should be poor, but humble; not as always needy, but as always looking up to him, and remembering to honour him with that he hath given him, that he may receive that he wants, and further perfection. Pay then thy debt, and pay it to receive more, that thou mayest be perfect, and think he speaks to every one. If I be thy Father, honour me; remember me thy Creator in the days of thy youth and age; even as one saith, so often as thou breathest, so often thou oughtest to remember God. And seeing thy being is ever in one, so thy thankfulness should be ever both for thy ever being. And as Chrysostom, thou wilt say, Lord, keep me as the apple of thine eye; he will answer thee again, Keep my commandments as the apple of thine eye; so thou wilt come to God and say, Lord keep me, for thou hast made me; I am thine, and the works of thy hands. God will answer thee then, Keep the words of my mouth, and so honour me, for thou art the works of my hands.

*Doct.* The election of God, by which he hath freely chosen men to be his sons and to be heirs of eternal life, binds them to obedience, service, and honouring of him. So the Lord reasoneth here, If I be a father, if I have adopted and chosen you for sons, where is my honour? He challengeth but that he hath title. To this purpose is that Eph. i. 4, 1 Peter i. 17, Mat. v. 16.

*Reason* 1. Because his choice and adoption is so free, for it is without any merits or deserts of man; of his own free will and pleasure, Eph. i. 5, long before there was any merit of man, for it was before he was. It is ancienter than the world, it is coeternal with God himself; for as he is from all eternities, so he hath loved his from all eternity. Then free and most frank is this choice of men to be sons. Now benefits, the more free and undeserved, the more they bind men to perform thankfulness for them; so in this. And this is that God would have for it. Honour him.

*Reason* 2. Because it is so rare a benefit, not all, not many, but few of many, Mat. xx. 16, 'few chosen.' Benefits that are rare are precious, *rara, chara*, and so deserve and exact more. Whenas then God amongst so many nations of barbarous men, and in such a multitude of condemned men, hath called a man to so happy a condition, that he should be in the number of those who are chosen his sons, and to inherit eternal life, the benefit being so much the greater, as the number is smaller, must needs bind to this duty.

*Use* 1. This may serve to stop the mouth of desperate wretches, that make the doctrine of God's decree an occasion of carelessness, and from it take liberty to dishonour God; that reason if they be elected they are sure to be saved, whether they live well or ill, and so *è contra;* whence they give all liberty to themselves, and live licentiously, and dishonour God. Of these I would demand whether they think the former testimonies and this particular preface was written by the Spirit of Christ? If they say no, they shew themselves in the state of reprobation, whatsoever God hath decreed of them. If they say it is, then let them compare the spirit they speak with, and this Spirit by which these are written, and see themselves not to be led with the Spirit of Christ, which cannot so contradict itself. It requireth duty and reverence, service and honour, because thou art his; thou wilt give none, because, if perhaps thou beest, thou needest not; if not, it is bootless and doubtful. In this thou determinest not to honour God, but to dishonour him. Tell me this, thou that art a father and disposest of all thy goods in secret before ever thy son knows how, or hath inquired, and used means to know how; if he should set light by thee, and carry himself undutifully towards thee, as if he would give thee an occasion to give all away from him, if thou hadst not done it already, wouldst thou not think it a marvellous preposterous and impious course? And yet this is that which thou wilt do with God, like a desperate miscreant, not knowing whether God hath purposed thee salvation and heaven, which he hath disposed and made his will of in secret; yea, not taking so much pains to search and inquire by the book of God, and the notes in it, whether thou be in the number, but ere ever thou seek after it, to know whether thou be in his book, so wilfully behavest thyself as if thou meantest to make him alter his will (if it were possible) if he were purposed to deal well with thee before. But know thou, if he were purposed to disinherit thee, yet thou oughtest to honour him because he is thy father; and this without all consideration of heaven and hell. Much more if he have elected thee, and thou be his son this way too, oughtest thou to honour him; and know, that if thou beest his, no such thought can possess thy heart long, less allow thy mouth to speak it boastingly in a secure and careless course of life; what may come from a man of a troubled mind and in temptation, this is not to this purpose, but the other can never be. Nay, know that God disposeth all things sweetly and orderly to bring a man to this end, if he have once chosen him; as a father that aims at some state of life for his son, as to make him a lawyer, or a divine, he trains him up so, and brings him up in learning, and studies, and directions.

*Use* 2. This should admonish every one who, by a divine search, findeth himself the son of God by adoption or election, or thinks himself is one, to remember what he is, and what it requires of him, even to honour God as a father. The former binds, but this binds more, as a twofold cord; the law because of our creation, the gospel for our election and redemption: 'We are no more servants, but sons,' Gal. iv. 5, 6. But must we the less serve him, or not? This were a

gallant gospel indeed. Nay, we must the rather, because sons, Mal. iii. 16. We must not change our service, but the manner of our service, for he hath made us to serve him: Luke i. 74, 75, 'That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life,' Not as servants for wages, but as sons in a more honourable kind of service, with a free affection, in no mercenary manner, otherwise this binds us more than before, and to do more if it were possible than the law reqnires. If the other, though free, yet not so rare, do bind, how much more this so rare a benefit should bind us! In the first, he gave me to myself; in the other, he gave himself to me. To whom I owe myself for my being, to him I am more indebted for giving himself to me;* more is then due unto him, and more must we endeavour. If our being, and being men, require it of us, what this being sons, without which it had been better we had never been, yea, a thousand times? If his bounty in creating us, what his mercy and love in electing us? The world, though peevishly and corruptly it upbraids those that are God's, and in some sinister and corrupt affection challenges more of them, than of others towards themselves, than towards God; yet those who are indeed God's, must think such speeches are goads to prick them forwards to more. For God hath done more for them, therefore more is required of them; yea, more than they think they ought to perform. Every one must argue as David, see 2 Sam. vi. 21: 'And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord.' It will not serve and go for current, if God's children elected be not more diligent to honour him than others.

*Where is my honour?* We have seen by what right God requires this; we must see now the thing. It is honour, which is indeed childlike, and filial fear, to obey and serve him for love, rather than fear, as sons do their father; and of this I will thus speak: first, that men must give it to God, the sons to the father; secondly, how it differs from the servile fear; thirdly, the effects of it, that it may be known, whether had or no, and if not, it may be sought; if had, it may be joyed in.

First, That men must give it unto God.

*Doct.* The children of God, that is, his sons and daughters, ought to honour him, that is, to serve and obey him; to do the good he commands, not for fear of punishment, or hope of reward, but for the love of good, and righteousness, and his goodness and mercy, willingly and of conscience. Hereto may we apply that Psalm cxxx. 4, and Rom. xii. 1, and 1 John ii. 1, inferred upon the second.

* In primo dedit me mihi, in secundo dedit et se mihi, cui debeo me propter me; debeo plus quam me propter se.—*Ber.*

*Reason* 1. Because else they cannot be sons and daughters, whose nature is to obey their parents, and do them all service of love. Fear is servile, if it flow not from love; and the honour which comes not from love is not honour, but flattery, a formal fawning.*

*Reason* 2. Because if they obey him and honour him for hope of good, and fear of evil, and punishment, it is self-love that moves them, not God-love, nor the love of righteousness. Now if men require more, nor account not of this, when self-love hath the sway, and men seek themselves, how should God, and why should men, expect it from him? One blesses God because he is powerful, another because he is good to him, another because he is simply good in himself, Psalm cxviii. 1. The first is a servant, and fears; the second is an hireling, and looks for gain; the third is a son, and loves his father.†

*Obj.* There are many promises of good things for obedience, and threats of evil for disobedience. Are they made to servants, or written for them alone, or also for sons? If sons, why may not they look to them, and for them do service?

*Sol.* Without question, whatsoever is written is for sons, not servants, or principally for them, yet is it not acceptable to God when it is done for these, for nothing proceeding from hirelings or slaves can be acceptable. Why, then, are these written? Namely, to help them in it, not to be the principal mover of it. *Vide* James ii. 8.

*Use* 1. This proves that many men's works and obedience are not the honour of God, nor things acceptable, though according to the law and things commanded (which in another are his honour, and accepted of him), the end or motive not being good and right as it should.

The second thing to be observed, is how this childlike and filial fear differs from the other servile fear, and that it doth in divers things.

The *first* difference is in respect of the object, that is, of that which is feared, that is, sin. The one fears sin as it is sin, and because it is sin; the other only the punishment of sin, and not sin at all, but in regard of the punishment. The former curbs the action only; the other the affection. The one liketh and loveth sin, but he dare not commit it in regard of the danger that may ensue of it; the other hateth and abhorreth sin, and would not commit it though he might do it without danger at all, as Prov. viii. 13. 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil,' Ps. xcvii. 10. And because it deals with the affection, it is called a pure fear, Ps. xix. 9. 'The fear of the Lord is clean or pure,' for it purgeth the heart, as faith is said to do,

* Servilis est timor quamdiu ab amore non manat, qui de amore non venit honor, non honor sed adulatio.—*Bern.* Cant. 83.

† Est qui confitetur Deo, quia potens est, est quoniam sibi bonus est, est quia simplicitèr bonus est, Psalm cxviii. 1, 19, primus servus est et timet, secundus mercenarius et cupit sibi, tertius filius est et diligit patrem.

Acts xv. 9. The other is a melting fear, but this is a purging and refining fear.

The *second* difference is in their grounds. The one is grounded only upon the wrath of God, and for his justice; the other regardeth them, but specially his mercy and goodness, Ps. cxxx. 4, Hosea iii. 5. The filial fear, to offend God in regard of benefits past; the servile, for evil to come. See the difference plainly, Jer. v. 22–24, 'Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: or will ye not be afraid at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bounds of the sea by the perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof rage, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it. But this people hath an unfaithful and rebellious heart; they are departed and gone. For they say not in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both early and late, in due season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.' If you will not have this filial fear, yet at least shake not off this servile dread; if not fear in regard of good I have, yet of evil I may do them.

By these two (for the present) may every one examine himself, whether he hath a servile or a filial fear. If thou fearest as a child, thou hatest sin as sin, because it is sin; thou art like a man that loathes a meat, and therefore would not eat of it. If only a servile fear, thou loathest sin for the punishment, not for itself indeed, but the sequel: like a man that hath a mind to eat of something that the physician hath forbidden him, and is hurtful, and abstains only because he dares not touch it for fear of further inconvenience. If thou hast the childlike fear, it is not the outward work that dislikes thee, and external act of sin only, but even the desires, motions, and affections, for it is pure. That dart is fear which pierces and kills the very desires of the flesh.* If the servile only, then the outward work only and practice of sin is feared; if a filial fear, then it will grieve thee to offend, nay, to be provoked to offend so good and gracious, so merciful and loving a Father, who hath been ever so gracious and good unto thee. But if but the servile fear, then only when thou feelest his hand, or fearest an imminent danger, or hast the fresh remembrance of a judgment which is but new taken from him, for which a child of God must and ought to fear; but then are not these the principal causes of fear in him, for these he fears, and flies sin, but principally for the other. If a filial fear, thou art afraid to offend in lieu of thankfulness for thy being and preservation, and all thy manifold blessings received already; if a servile, only for fear of evils, or hope of that which is to come. It is the whip, the scourge, and the rod, that causeth the hypocrite as an ass, a fool, and a slave, to forbear and leave sin: but it is love, conscience, and obedience that maketh God's children willingly to abhor it.

* Ista sagitta timor, qui configit et interficit carnis desideria.—*Ber.*

(Nazianzen), if thou beest a slave and a servant, stand in fear of the whip or the scourge; if an hireling, work for thy wages, expect thy reward; but if, over and above all these, thou beest a son, do good, because it is thy duty to please and observe thy father, from whom thou hast received so much good before.

The *third* difference of these two fears is this: The one is a loving fear, and the other is a hateful fear. The first is joined with love, such as good subjects bear to good princes, and ordinarily children bear to their fathers. The second is joined with hatred, such as servants bear to their hard and cruel masters. The one would, if they could, withdraw themselves out of God's government, and get out of his sight, as Adam, Gen. iii.; as a fugitive servant, as Hagar, Gen. xvi.; the other would not willingly away from God, but submitteth himself unto him, and seeketh as he can to press nearer and nearer, as far as he dare, with due reverence of his Majesty, like the prodigal son who came home to his father, and yielded himself willingly into his hands. And therefore it is a true saying, that after sin the wicked are troubled, they cannot get themselves far enough from God; and the godly are troubled, they cannot come near enough home to him: the one is afraid of the losing of God, the other is afraid of God's finding of him. Of that, saith Augustine, in 1 John iv., it is called *castus timor*, a chaste fear. It is one thing to fear God lest he send thee to hell, another lest himself depart from thee. That fear is not chaste, because it comes not from the love of God, but from the fear of punishment; but this is chaste, because it comes from the love of God, whom thou delightest in;* so that this filial fear agreeth with the love of God's majesty, yea, it riseth out of love. A man is afraid to offend one that he loveth, but the servile fear is joined with the deadly hatred of God. And so, as it is said, whom they fear they hate, and they desire he may perish whom they hate.† So it may be said of this, that by it he is not *homicida*, a man-slayer, but *Deicida*, a God-slayer, wishing there were never a God to punish him.

The *fourth* difference of these two fears is in their continuance, which is manifest.

First, If we consider them in divers subjects, for the one is but for a brunt, like lightning that giveth a flash and is gone, and comes in an instant, never seizeth upon the soul, nor dwelleth in the heart. For instance we may take Pharaoh, Exod. vii.–x.; so Ahab, when Elijah had summoned him, he fears, 1 Kings. xxi. 27, but soon after he goes fearless to Ramoth-Gilead, 1 Kings xxii. 26, 27. The filial fear is permanent and constant, as the causes of it are, Isa. xi. 2, Prov.

* Aliud est timere Deum ne te mittat in Gehennam, aliud ne ipse à te recedat; ille non est castus qui non venit ab amore Dei, sed ex timore pœnæ, iste castus est quia venit ex amore Dei quem amplecteris.—*August. in* 1 John iv.

† Quem metuunt oderunt, et quem oderunt periisse cupiunt.

xxviii. 14; for it is no natural work, but a supernatural habit.

Secondly, If we consider them in one subject, the one outlasteth and overlives the other: 1 John iv. 18, 'Perfect love casteth out fear,' that is, servile fear; but Ps. xix. 9, 'The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever,' that is, filial fear; when it comes it casts out that, because it brings with it assurance of God's favour. It remains still, having the less pain and trouble with it the longer it lasteth, and the more forward it cometh to perfection. And this fear is so lasting that it remains after this life; not that the blessed shall fear either lest they should offend, for they are then without danger of falling; but in regard of God's power, and his incomparable and his incomprehensible graces, there shall be a reverent dread, and yet delightful, such as the angels have now in heaven, as angels fear, Isa. vi. 2–4, when they are in the presence of God; for, as we reverence a great man in regard of his place, though he bear us no evil will, nor we expect any evil from him, so, no doubt, the holy saints and angels in heaven in regard of God. Though they neither fear to lose him, because they cannot fall from him, nor to offend him, because there is no danger to displease him, yet they reverence him still in regard of his majesty, which they can neither sufficiently admire nor adore.

Now, further, by these two differences, as by the former, may every man examine himself, whether he hath a childlike or servile fear.

As by the first, whether thou lovest or hatest God for fear. Wouldst thou flee from God when thou hast offended? Couldst thou wish he were not? If thou desirest that either he knew not thy sins, or could not or would not punish them; then thou wouldst that God were not, when thou desirest he were ignorant, or impotent, or unjust.* And hence thy wretched heart, under this fear, even hates God. Thou hast but a servile fear. But canst thou yield thyself to God, and draw near to him, fearing to be forsaken of God, being willing to yield thyself into his hands? This is filial fear. There is, saith Augustine, an unchaste, adulterous woman, who feareth her husband, but she feareth him because she loveth her naughtiness, and therefore his company is not delightful, but burdensome unto her; and loving evil, she is afraid of his coming, lest he find her so. There is a chaste woman, she loveth and affecteth her husband, and liveth with him in good sort, and would never have him out of sight. Now ask them both whether they fear their husbands. They will say they do; there is the same answer, but not the same mind.† Ask them why, and that will put the difference. The one answereth, lest he should come and find her, and find out her lewdness and lightness; the other, lest being present he should depart, and lest he should love her less, and by any offence of hers be estranged. As he much misliketh the former woman, so mislike thyself if thou fear God in that sort, and carry thyself so to God in this sort, as thou wouldst thy wife should be affected unto thee.

By the second, is thy fear momentary, soon come, soon gone? Dost thou not fear always? Then fear thy fear it is not true. If thou hast overcome thy servile fear, and dost not fear still, thou canst not have true fear; for as love expels one fear and casts it out, so it causeth another, and that such a fear as is never afterwards extinguished. Though the act and working of it be sometime more fresh than others, yet the habit is never lost.

The third thing touching this filial fear is the effects of it. And these I reduce to these heads, such as awful and dutiful children have, and so may well be so resembled.

The first is a desire to know his will and pleasure, to find it out, and a delight in doing of it. As a child will be desirous to know his father's mind, that he may not offend him, and be ready to do it of himself when he hath found it; hence that Ps. cxii. 1, 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.' See it by the contrary, Job xxi. 9, 14, 'Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Ps. xxv. 12, 13, 'What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.'

The second is a suspicion and jealousy of particular actions, lest they should do that unawares which might be offensive to God. A good child, if he doubt to do aught that he thinketh his father will not like of, he will first ask the question, whether he will have him do it or no, and let it alone till he know his mind in the matter. So a child of God, he will be careful to try all his works by his will and his word, and to abstain till he know what his good will and his pleasure is. Thus was Job jealous of his children, Job i. 5, so of his own wife, Job ix. 28. Therefore the Spirit commends him for a man fearing God, and such as none was like, yea, as the devil could find no fault with him, Rom. xiv. 5. He will be fully persuaded it is God's will before he do it, 1 Thes. v. 21; not enough to say, I do not know it unlawful; better debar ourselves of some lawful things, than do one unlawful, Eccles. v. 5, 6.

The third is a wary shunning and avoiding of things he knows will offend, as an awful child will hardly be drawn or wooed to do aught that his father hath expressly forbidden him, or that will displease him, as Jacob to lie and deceive his father, Gen. xxvii.; or if he be drawn, yet if his father come suddenly upon him, and find him about it or beginning it, he will stay

* Deum tua peccata vindicare aut non posse, aut nolle, aut ea nescire, vis ergò Deum non esse Deum, qui vis eum aut injustum esse, aut impotentem aut insipientem.—*Bern.* de temp. 58.

† Una vox, non eadem mens.

his hand soon and be ashamed of himself. So the man that fears God will not be wooed and urged to those things that he knoweth cannot but offend God. So Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9, 'There is none greater in his house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Neh. v. 15, 'The former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.' Or if because of infirmity or strength of temptation he be violently carried away, yet if he shall but once seriously think of the presence of God about him, it will make him for shame to stay, or break off the practice of sin, as in David: 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, 'David's heart smote him, and he said, I have done very foolishly.'

The fourth is a grief and a fear to see aught done by others that may provoke God to wrath, as a good child will be loath any of his brethren or any of the servants should do aught that may anger his father, if it be but the disquieting of him. So a true child of God will be vexed to see others take such courses as may be offensive to his heavenly Father: so that 2 Peter ii. 7, and David, Ps. cxix. 53, 136, 139, 158. Such are commended and marked, Ezek. ix.; as they are condemned, 1 Cor. v. 1, who do contrary.

The fifth, a trembling at the wrath and anger of God declared for sin either in word or deed.

First, in word; at God's threatenings either against himself or others. As a child quaketh and trembleth at his father's chiding, though it be with some others, so do the children of God commonly when they hear the wrath of God denounced against others; so is it, Isa. lxvi. 2, Ps. cxix. 161, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, Jer. xxvi. 18, Hab. iii. 16.

Now, secondly, if at his word, how much more at his rod; if, when he speaks, more when he beats themselves or others. As a child, if he see his father to take the rod in hand to correct any of the family, he standeth trembling and quaking, he feareth lest he should have a wipe by the way, so the child of God feareth, as before God's face, when he seeth the hand of God upon others, as when he feeleth it upon himself: David, 2 Sam. vi. 7–9; the church, Acts v. 11, Ps. cxix. 119, 120, Hab. iii. 16.

Now, these being the effects, and, as it were, the fruits of this filial fear, it shall be good for a man to examine himself by them whether he have it or no, for by the fruits you shall know it. It is to be feared that if men will do this seriously, but a few of those who call God father every day will be found to have this filial fear, and so his sons indeed. The first fruit is a desire to know and find out God's will, and then to do it; but, alas! how many have we that refuse to seek after the knowledge of his ways, like those, Job xxi. 14? But say some will search the word, yet it is only to furnish themselves with matter of discourse, and not to find out that which may serve to order and direct their lives; they are a curious kind of men, and, as Seneca saith, *scholæ non vitæ discitur*, they study school quirks and not points of practice. Others are sorry many times that they lighted on more than they looked after, as the young man, not answered to his mind, was sorry he had asked, Luke xv. 23. Bernard hath observed of his experience, *Cant.*, ser. 74: many, saith he, have I known made sad upon the knowledge of the truth, because they could not so pretend ignorance as before. Or if not this, but with the son in the Gospel, say, and do not, or defer as Jonah, or do as Balaam, bless, when he would have cursed; so they, their hands go against their hearts. These, and such like, must needs be void of this fear.

The second is a jealousy over his particular actions. But how many run headlong into all actions, never regarding what warrant they have for them, that though never so many make doubt of them, and the lawfulness of them, yet all is one to them; as they know nothing for them, so they know nothing against them; and they either do as Peter, Luke xxii. 49, 50, who cut off Malchus's ear before he could hear his answer, or as Prov. xx. 25, do things first, and examine them after. These are far from this fear, for where it is, there, if any doubt arise about an action that seemed indifferent before, he will be jealous of himself and walk the surest way, when he knoweth he may do or abstain without offence, but he is in some suspicion of the other, he will rather be sure to go on a good ground, than hazard the incurring of God's displeasure though he lose somewhat, yea much, both of his profit and pleasure, knowing the fear of God is opposite to this manner of walking; and so it is made, Eccles. v. 1. 5, 6.

The third is a careful avoiding of known sins, and things that will offend. But how many give liberty to their flesh, run with a full swing into the practice of sin, and never care to return out of it again; who vaunt of this fear, and yet often vaunt of their sins, and never shame at them; nay, sooner shame and blush to be a man noted to have a care to avoid the common sins of the age. How have these men any child-like fear? Will they account that their children do lovingly fear them, when they run into all or many things they know will displease them, and are ashamed to be accounted more than ordinarily dutiful? Questionless, no; then let them be their own judges, and shall, for they tell us they have no fear, if that be their fear, Prov. viii. 13.

The fourth is a grief to see others offend. But many boast of the fear of God, and yet they delight and take pleasure in the sight and hearing of other men's sins, never caring nor regarding what others do, so they be not like them. They can daily see many Laodiceans, neither hot nor cold, amongst us; many Ephesians,

that have lost their first love; many Jebusites, idolaters, amongst us, and swarming amongst us. These they see, and yet they sigh not at it, nay, either take pleasure or make profit by it, it is but a boast. They are void of the filial fear of God, because they have no care whether he be honoured or dishonoured, pleased or displeased; as if a child could endure his father's dishonour, if not be revenged of them for want of power and such like, yet will he mourn and sorrow, How should I bear my father's dishonour? And if these, much more those who seek to draw others to sin, swearing, whoring, drunkenness, and such like; they can have no true fear of God as children.

The fifth, trembling at his judgments threatened or executed upon others. Many say they fear God, and yet they can hear the wrath and judgments of God denounced against sin, and it may be the sins they practise, yet are never a whit moved at all, but go as they came, as if the word were but wind. As Jer. v. 13, their hearts melt not, nor they mourn not, nay, when they see God's judgments upon others, they censure and condemn them, but fear nothing themselves; nay, often when they are in the same condemnation, if they be not in the same punishment. Sure it is, they have no child-like fear at all, they are worse than the beasts, yea, senseless things, who tremble at his voice; and they shew themselves children of wrath: only the children of wrath are fearless of wrath,* as St Bernard speaketh.

*If I be a master, where is my fear?* The application of the second rule of nature. We must speak of God's Lordship, then of the fear he requires for it. He is a Lord in respect of his creatures, either generally or specially: first, generally, *jure creationis et gubernationis*, by right of creation and government; secondly, particularly, *jure pacti et redemptionis*, by right of covenant and redemption. First, *jure redemptionis*, Exod. xx. 2, 1 Cor. vi. 20; secondly, *jure pacti et conventionis*, by right of covenant and agreement. Those who live in his church have 'made a covenant with him by sacrifice,' Ps. l., and have bound themselves by oath to serve him, and have covenanted to be his people, Jer. xl. Here he means both, but not of the whole in both, but only of government and covenant, for the other in the former; and by these he challengeth obedience and service, as by the former, for that which is required under honour, is here under fear, the same thing, but differing in affection and some circumstances as before. But first of his government and jurisdiction, in respect of his blessings and preservation.

*Doct.* Men, in respect of God's government over them, ought to serve and obey him, being under him as subjects are under their lords and princes, by whose authority and laws they enjoy their lives and liberties, increase in state and riches. So under God, he preserving, protecting, increasing them and their states himself. If I be a master and lord, and you enjoy these things by me, where is my service and obedience? This is proved by Isaiah i. 2, 3. That of the devil in accusing Job, chap. i. 9, 10, shews that God's government requires this, and his answer to his wife, chap. ii. 10, also shews it. That of David, Ps. lxxi. 6, is pertinent, and that of Jer. v. 24.

*Reason.* Because this is no less benefit than the former of creation, for that was once done, this is always, and as it were every day, after a sort. God creates man anew, ever preserving that he once created, shewing in this no less power nor love than in the other; and if for that obedience is debt, for creating in a moment, how much more for a continual preservation?

*Use.* This may admonish all men, that as their creation before, so their continual preservation under God's government, his lordship and dominion over them, requires all the service and obedience they can perform, because they are his subjects and servants, he their master and lord. All sovereigns and lords look for all fear and obedience from such as they govern, protect, and whose good and peace they procure; all masters from servants they feed, and clothe, and govern; and this they yield unto them; how much more all men to God, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, their sovereign and lord of all, and over all? Therefore all, high and low, kings and subjects, male and female, bond and free, rich and poor, owe this to him, and are bound unto him for it. For kings rule, the great ones govern, the rich prosper, the poor live by him, yea, all are under him, he preserveth and governeth all. Whatsoever privilege one man hath above another, yet there is no privilege in respect of God. If the king reigned without him, if the noble ruled without him, if the rich increased without him, it were somewhat; but when none of these, all is by his providence, and from his power, which makes him say to all, 'If I be a master or lord, where is my fear?' The king is great but in respect of his subjects; nothing greater in respect of God than another, as the earth is but a small mote or point in respect of the heavens. The rich are wealthy in respect of the poor, but, but poor compared with the king's treasure, more poor compared with God. So that, be they all great, and as high and as rich as may be, yet their crowns and coronets, their honours and riches, their states and lives, are in his hands. And as a ship in one day upon the sea would perish without a governor, so would all these in a moment come to nought without him, his government, protection, and providence. See then how every one that acknowledgeth God his lord and master, and feeleth indeed his government and providence for good, ought to serve and fear him. If thou dost not believe that God moves all thy members when thou dost move, thou art not worthy the name of a Christian, saith one, for St Paul hath taught it, Acts xvii. 28. But if thou dost believe it, that thou receivest such

* Soli filii iræ iram non sentiunt.—*Bern.*

from him, and yet darest provoke and offend him, I know not what name is evil enough for thee; so for this, if thou acknowledge not all is from God, through his providence, and from his care, that thou art as thou art, thou art not worthy the name of a son or servant; but if thou acknowledge it, and yet shakest off his fear, and performest not obedience to him, what name is bad enough for thee? nay, what punishment is sufficient for such an offence? What then, if for life and continuance, how much more for a well and wealthy being, when men's portions are made fatter, and their state better, both than in former times, and also than thousands others; God's providence and care more to them, their obedience and service should be more to him. And yet it is a lamentable thing, my eyes could cast out tears for it in secret (as the prophet), to see many men risen of nothing, when they had little, were diligent and careful to serve and obey God in themselves, and in their families, and those who belong to them; but after that God's government was more good to them, and they prospering better by it, I know not how, such is the corruption of our nature, they serve him now far less in them and theirs. And yet it is thought excusable, as if a subject, who lived under his king, and that only lived without wealth, or honour, or advancement, or but with a small pittance of these, and then gave him service and all loyal duty, should after, when he had received these in bountiful measure, by his gracious bounty and government, either less respect him or be less loyal, or more rebellious, and think it were tolerable enough, because he is now more wealthy, worshipful, and honourable. But whatsoever he thinks, others would condemn him, and every of these who deal thus with God; then shall they be judged by their own mouth. Oh that they would indeed judge themselves, that they be not judged of the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 31, else undoubtedly he will judge them, if his; in this life punishing them in those things which have made them by their corruption less loyal unto him, as wealth, riches, honour, friends, and such like, that he may so bring them home again, and let them see how they have wronged him, for great things giving him less. If he do not, the case is more fearful, he means to condemn them with the world. And though they will not now acknowledge they injure God any wise in thus dealing outwardly with him, yet the day shall come, and it is now at hand, when this injury shall be made manifest, and whenas these complaints which are now made by us shall be heard, though men have now their ears so heavy, and their eyes so shut up, and their hearts so fat, that they cannot see, or hear, or understand to be converted and healed. It shall (saith one) be equal and right with God, that those who will not now open their eyes when there is time, and while the multitude of blessings they enjoy by God's gracious government, doth invite them to serve and fear him; yea, I say it shall be just and right that their eyes shall be opened by the multitude of torments, which must continue for ever. But of you who hear me this day, let me hope better things; nay, let me see them.

*If I be a master.* God is a master; secondly, by covenant, specially in this place, for he speaks to such as profess him and his worship, and such as were in his church, and had made a covenant with him; as his subjects, he their God and Lord, Ps. l. 5, Jer. l. 5.

*Doct.* In the church, all ought to obey God, because of the covenant they have made with him; being in that special manner his servants, having covenanted with him, that he should be their God, and they would be his people, Ps. l. 7, 14; Jer. iii. 4, 5; Isa. xlviii. 1, 2; Luke vi. 46.

*Reason* 1. Because if the former, and for the former reason, more for this, when God hath taken them so nigh to himself in special place; for if all subjects owe duty and obedience, more they whom the king takes into his own house and court, into his chamber of presence. So if all that are in the world be the Lord's kingdom, and ought to serve and obey him, and are bound by his general government and protection, more those whom he hath taken into his church, his house, his court, and his chamber of presence, and employed them to some special service and office about his person as it were.

*Reason* 2. Because, if they be covenant servants, and that be professed, then must they remember their conditions, for without them no covenant is made, and the condition on their parts is to serve and obey him, and this very common honesty and servility requires of every servant.

*Reason* 3. Because God took them into covenant, not as men do commonly their servants, then when they were able to do him service, and look before they agree with them what service they are able to perform them. But God (saith Chrysostom) far otherwise; he receives them into covenant when they are able to do nothing, and maintains them long before they can do anything, therefore reason they should do him service when they are able.

*Use* 1. A reproof of many men, who live more disobedient and rebellious in the church, than thousand heathens have done out of it; who only are God's servants at large, and yet do they outgo them in many things in the outward service and subjection to God, according to the law of nature he hath ingrafted into them. Many sins thousands of them would have blushed to have heard tell of, and been marvellous ashamed only to speak of them without detestation, which these in the church, and for all their covenant, shame not to do, and blush not to brag of them. Questionless, as the same sins are greater in the church than out of it, for ignorance excuseth *à tanto*, though not *à toto*, so the same and greater shall have greater punishment, howsoever they may carry it out for a time; yea, and howsoever some dream all in

the church must needs be saved, though the multitude without be condemned, yet they shall find as it is, Mat. xi. 22, 24; so it shall be easier for those heathen than for them; lesser shall their torments be in hell.

*Use* 2. To instruct every man in the church, who is God's covenant servant, having made a covenant with him, with the sacraments, and by them; that he ought to serve and obey him with all faithfulness and diligence. So do masters look for from their covenant servants, so will servants of any honesty do with their masters; so God expects, so should they perform. It is not the boasting of their baptism, and coming to the Lord's supper, the renewing of their covenant, that will be profitable unto them, when they perform not their conditions, to renounce the enemies of God, and to serve him. Nay, it will be their shame and greater reproach, because, while they boast of the covenant, they shew themselves covenant breakers, such as common honesty would blush at, the sin of Gentiles who were given up to a reprobate sense, Rom. i. 28. If any man imagine that these set him at liberty, that is, carnal liberty, he marvellously deceives himself. Truth it is, that it is true liberty, for the service of God is most true liberty; but it is not their carnal liberty to do as they list, but to follow the command of God, as the centurion's servants, for they have their press money or soldiers' oath given unto them; yea, and being so nigh brought to him, they owe more service; for their more honour, more obedience. He that imagineth it is an easy life to be a courtier, to be employed about the king's person, in his presence or bedchamber, doth much deceive himself, as ignorant of such things; for though they have more honour, more favour, and obtain many special suits for themselves and friends, yet they have more labour, more watching; yea, more diligence and industry is looked for from them, and they usually perform. So in this, in the church, God's court, there is more honour, more comfort, more suits obtained, but more service required, or at least more bonds of this service, and more reason they should perform it. That Chrysostom urgeth touching virginity of a woman, a virgin and married, may be here applied: that if there be any liberty to mind earthly things, to follow the pleasures of the world and such things, it is to those who are out of the church, not to those who are in it, further than helps them to this service.

*Where is my fear?* We have seen the reasons why this is due, and why God doth challenge it; we must now see the duty. And this is servile fear. Fear in general is but the expectation of an imminent evil; this fear rises from the consideration of the power and justice of God.

And of this, first, a man ought to perform and give it to God.

Secondly, The effects of it. Of the differences were spoken before.

*Doct.* The servants of God (howsoever they be servants) even in the church ought to fear him, that is, to serve him and avoid the evils he hath forbidden them, for fear of his power and justice, Jer. v. 22, and x. 7; Mat. x. 28; Ps. xxxiii. 8; 2 Cor. v. 10, 11; Rom. xi. 20; Rev. xv. 4.

*Reason* 1. Because he is able, as he made them with a word, and the whole world at first, so to destroy them, and bring them to nought with a word, when they displease and provoke him. Now in reason, as natural men (as Tully said) do more regard what he can do to them, in whose power they are, than what he will do with them; for, being able, he may when he will come upon them and destroy them; but being willing and not able, he cannot at his will. So in reason ought all men to deal with God, and towards him.

*Reason* 2. Because his justice will not suffer him to pass over the breach of his law unpunished, no more than he will or can be unjust; nay, no more than he will not be God, for if unjust, no God; if he let things slip over unpunished, he must be unjust, except in things where men judge themselves first.

*Use* 1. Then in the church must there be fear of God, namely of his justice and power, and not of his mercy only, contrary to some who think, in the church only men should fear God for his goodness. I answer, that it is true this should be the principal thing for which they should fear; but in the church, though we be all one man's servants, yet we are not all one man's children; yet, if all were so, because of the unregenerate part this ought to be, in that a man is not altogether freed, and made a son, but is partly a servant, &c.

*Use* 2. Then ought every one in the church to endeavour to know his power and justice, and to acknowledge them; for howsoever it is true that all are alike in the hand of God, and his dominion over all, as the psalmist speaks, yet all do not regard and take notice of it. A great many do not believe, nor are persuaded of them, and that maketh them they fear not God as they should. For as *ignoti nulla cupido*, there is no desire of that which is unknown, so *nulla formido*, there is no fear, for fear riseth not so much out of the outward evil, as it doth of the inward apprehension of it; and therefore not the nearness of the danger, but the conceit of the evil, raiseth the affection of fear in the heart. Therefore Isaiah saith of some, that they go down laughing to hell, they play merrily upon hell's mouth, as the child without fear playeth upon the cockatrice's den, because they are ignorant what danger they are in. So, then, it is not all who are in his power, and over whom his authority and justice is, but such as know them for present, or how they may feel them after, that fear and stand in awe of him as they should.

*Use* 3. To teach men, if they have not the spirit of sons, the love of God and righteousness, that for con-

science they will obey, yet at the least, that they endeavour to obey him for fear of his power and justice; as servants, if not as sons. The other is that which is acceptable; yet this is that which God calls for, and men ought to do, even the outward act of God's service for fear of his power and justice. Though I cannot say it hath any promises of good things, yet hath God shewed good, and given blessings to those which have it only: as to Ahab and the Ninevites for their repenting at the fear of his judgments and threatening, to shew how he will much more accept the repentance of his; yea, and to draw on such servants to the like, for that is a special benefit to his church, they be orderly in the outward duty.

The second thing concerning this servile fear is the effects of it, which are these:

The first, that it is *tanquam frænum ad equum*, as a bit and a bridle to men, to withhold them from sin, from the wilful practice of wicked things; it is the strongest curb that can be to keep man's corrupt nature from running forth into outrage, if it be surely settled once in them: manifest in Laban, when he pursued after Jacob, Gen. xxxi. 29; and that of Paul, when he sheweth that the want of this maketh the open high-way to the practice of all sin, Rom. iii. 18. And that this should be such a restraint, it stands with reason; because there are two main things which draw men to sin, and the practice of wickedness. The first is, the desire of some good men may get by the committing of it, but this desire is crossed by fear, which is the strongest and most violent affection of all others, and so stoppeth the passage of all other desires; so that it is neither profit nor pleasure that can make a timorous man hardy, nor can master and overcome fear in any man's mind, but it will overcome all desire of them, and no desire of it; nay, not the pleasure of itself; all the pleasure in the world cannot comfort a condemned person, nor banish fear out of his mind, so long as the halter hangeth over his head, so long as he daily and hourly looketh to be drawn to execution. But fear is able to expel pleasure, and the desire of those things we love most; as in Samson and Delilah's lap, when a noise of Philistines and a false alarm was upon him. God's fear expels all other fears, as is manifest by the midwives, Exod. i. 17, Jer. i. 17, Isa. viii. 12, 13. As a stronger nail drives out a less, so the fear of God other fears; the greater fear the less, the fear of hell-fire will carry the mastery of all other fear, Luke xii. 4, 5.

*Use* 1. We may make use of this, first, to prove many men amongst us not only void of a filial fear, which makes men avoid small sins, and to shun the act of any sin, but of this servile fear, because great sins are small or no sins with them; and they have the very habit of all sin, living in the practice of some one, or many gross and impious sins: whoredom, adultery, murder and blood, oppression and cruelty, covetousness and usury, swearing and blasphemy, &c.; so that whatsoever they say, we may say, Psa. xxxvi. 1, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.' When, as then, men go on in their wicked courses, and a small pleasure or desire of it will carry them to the fulfilling of the lusts of the flesh, and to all voluptuousness, and practice of all pleasure, a small fear make them commit any sin; and either coveting some pleasure, or thinking to avoid some displeasure of the world, they not only neglect the good, but make no bones to commit sin, and to lie in it. They have not certainly come so far as to have this servile fear, and so they are not sons, no, not servants of God; nay, though they have the shape of men, as Nebuchadnezzar had, yet they have not so much understanding as a beast, less than he had. For as Bernard saith (*Divers.* 12), let us lade and over-burden an ass, and toil him with labour, he cares not, because he is an ass; but if we assay to put him into the fire, or thrust him into a ditch or quarry, he shunneth all he can, because he loves life, and feareth death. And yet these run headlong to hell, and break forth into all kind of impiety, as the horse into the battle, when they know these will work their everlasting confusion.

*Use* 2. This may teach every man who would keep himself free from the practice and trade of sin, and that neither the pleasures nor displeasures of the world, the delights nor the dreads of it, shall draw him to be enticed, and openly sin, to labour for this fear, by which he shall be able to overcome temptations on all sides. For if he have this fear, a man would never sell himself to eternal torments for a draught of pleasure, or for a million of gold, when it might be said to him, as Joshua xxii. 18, 'Ye also are turned away this day from the Lord; and seeing ye rebel to-day against the Lord, even to-morrow he will be wroth with all the congregation of Israel.' Lo, to-day he offendeth, and to-morrow God will be wroth, and he shall perish in his wrath. Surely no profit or pleasure tendered unto him, would make him incur this danger. And for the other temptation, he would easily overcome it by this, even the fear of men's fear, with the fear of God's punishments, and say haply, as David, though he spoke it more sanctifiedly, Ps. cxix. 161, 'Princes have persecuted me without cause, but mine heart stood in awe of thy words,' if he have this fear, hardly such temptations will assault him; for as Chrysostom, *Hom.* 15, *ad pop. Ant.* If it be once known and heard that an armed soldier stands watching in a house for the defence of it, there is neither thief nor robber, nor any that practiseth such evil, will come near it; so, when fear is the keeper of man's heart, there is neither the temptation of pleasure, or profit, or worldly fear will set upon a man; but will fly away, or be easily expelled, subdued as it were, by the command of fear. God hath set two schoolmasters over us, *pudor et timor*, shame and

fear, that should lead an ingenuous nature; but if not that, yet this should, unless we will be worse than beasts.

The second effect of this fear is, that it is *tanquam acus ad filum*, the needle or the bristle to the thread; that is, that as they go before, and make way for the thread, but abide not there when it is once come, but goes out again; so this fear first entereth the heart of man, and makes way for love or the child-like fear, that loving fear, first when he is converted; and it entereth in for this end, to bring or draw in love after it; and love when it is once entered, casteth fear out of doors, that made entrance before, 1 John iv. 18. This is further manifest by the example of Paul, Acts ix. 3, 6, and Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 19, 27, so Acts ii. 37, 38, and xvi. 30, Rom. vii. 10.

*Reason* 1. Because God respects and accepts men to give them grace when they are troubled, and are smitten with this fear, Isa. lxvi. 2; and it is spoken *exclusivè*, none but them. This, then, must needs go before.

*Reason* 2. Because man's heart is not capable of grace without this; first, without this it is not fit to receive the impression of God's spirit. It gives no grace, but it makes capable of grace; as we see fire, though it give the metal no fashion, yet it maketh it liquid, and fit to be cast in any mould; it maketh the wax fit to receive any impression of the seal. So this fear, though it work no grace in the heart, but leaveth it as corrupt as it findeth it, yet it mollifieth it, and maketh it pliable for God's Spirit to work upon, which before, could not take the stamp of God's grace.

*Use* 1. This manifesteth that many men must needs be without grace, because many have not had this fear, which is ever before grace, wheresoever it comes; and grace never comes anywhere, where this usher hath not been before; it is the fore-runner of grace, as John Baptist was of Christ. As God appeared to Elias, so he approacheth to the soul, 1 Kings xix. 12–14; he was neither in the wind, nor earthquake, which rended the earth, and clave the rocks, nor in the fire that devoureth all before it, nor he went not before them, but he was in a soft voice which came afterwards. So is the Spirit and grace of God, it goes not before the servile fear, it is not with it, when it rends the hard hearts of men, and when it melts and mollifies them with the fire of God's wrath; but it cometh after, and speaketh peace and rest to the soul. Whereas many never tasted of this fear, and shew it by their lives, they have no fear of God; nay, in words brag they had never no such rentings and meltings of heart; nay, jest at those which have; they shew themselves void of grace, of true grace; yea, many who are not so outrageous, but civil, or rather secure, who, indeed, never felt any such trouble, and fight in them, any such fear or terror; but all things is, and ever was at peace within. They are men void of true grace and saving grace. They may have the shadow and similitudes of grace, but no substance and truth of it.

*Use* 2. This may teach every man that hath this fear in him, to make much of it and nourish it, it being the forerunner of grace, and as it were the harbinger of it, without which, it never appears, as God never comes with grace, unless this apparitor go before. As men, therefore, who desire the prince, and joy in his coming, will rejoice at the coming of his harbinger, and make much of him, so ought they of this fear; yea, and the greater this fear is, the more rejoice at it, as well as men may rejoice in fear, for the greater grace follows after; for in the examples of the Scriptures, those who have had most fear and conflicts in their conversion, have been the best men and women, most full of grace. God (saith Bernard) hath two feet, the one of fear, the other of love; and when he would enter a man's soul, he is wont to send ashore, or step first in with his foot of fear, then after, his foot of love; and the greater the fear is, which went before, the greater the love is which follows after.

The third effect of this fear is, to make the party it possesseth credulous, apprehending every surmise against him, making him incline to the worst, and forecast the utmost of the evil. As in that fear which the jailer was possessed with, Acts xvi. 27, he apprehended the worst and utmost. In Samuel and Joshua, so in the Ninevites, Jonah iii. 5, therefore it made them apprehend the worst, and believe it would be so.

*Reason* 1. Because fear brings to mind a man's sins and deserts, even those which were long before committed, and for them makes him apprehend danger, and deeper than indeed it is; as in the brethren of Joseph, Gen. xlii. 2. No marvel then, if it make them easily believe that such things may fall upon them.

*Reason* 2. Because they know by themselves that those who are injured and offended, do hate the offenders; and where hatred is joined with power and might, there must needs be danger of some fearful effect, and so makes them suspect the worse. It is so betwixt man and man, Gen. l. 15; so betwixt man and God.

*Use* 1. This teacheth us that undoubtedly there is a great want of this fear amongst most, because they do not apprehend or believe the dangers imminent, or as great as they be; but if a little, yet they will not make the worst, but the best of everything. They read often the judgments of God written; they hear them threatened against particular sins, and it may be their own; they see them executed upon particular men daily, every moment; and every morning he draws forth his judgments, yet they hang in suspense, whether he will do with them as they see him do with others before them. They have the root of gall and bitterness, Deut. xxix. 18, 19. How many scoffers have we, who will not believe that hell fire is so hot as the preacher tells them: no hell but in this life,

the gall of the conscience, which they can cure with company and good fellowship. How many have we that think the mouth of God is not so hot against sinners as men speak of, not so grievous as we would make them believe; and though now and then some be smitten, yet that he must for example-sake, to keep some more orderly; but no great fear there needs be of it so long as a man is not outrageous! How many that think repentance is not so difficult as men would make it; for at their deaths, for a little confession and proclaiming of their sorrow, they shall have a fellow pronounce pardon unto them! How many think that death is not so sudden, and so uncertain, as some imagine, few die so; and that they need not much suspect, and fear to be prepared, but they shall have time enough. And for a little good at their death, they hear many preachers not tell of the sins of men in their lives, for that will not be borne, but of their good at their deaths, and include everybody's soul in heaven. But these men are all void of this fear, for if they had it they would be easily persuaded of these things in their souls; yea, they would suspect far more than we could suggest, for so suspicious is fear; and as every affection is prone to the apprehension of those things that feed that affection, as love, joy, hatred, &c., so specially is fear.

*Use* 2. Particularly, every man may try himself whether he hath this fear or no. Is he like to the sons-in-law of Lot, when their father told them how that God would destroy Sodom? Gen. xix. 14, 'He seemed to them as one that mocked.' So when the ministers threat particular or general judgments, he is but one that mocks; and because of God's patience, after their preaching and denouncing, thou thinkest nothing will come; but say, as some have been heard speaking, the ministers do well to threaten sharply, and speak great words, and tell the people of fearful things, but yet we hope for far better things; fear thyself, because thou canst not fear the things they speak, and believe them, much less apprehend more, never casting the worst, but making the best of everything. This security argueth that thou wantest this servile fear.

The fourth effect of this fear is humility, for fear beats down the pride of the heart, and makes men not stand upon their pantoufles, man to man; not to stand upon terms, as betwixt Benhadad and Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 31, 32. So in this, where the fear of God's power is, the former examples of Ninevites, Israelites, Saul, jailer, sheweth it plainly, as that, Rom. xi. 20, 'Be not high-minded, but fear.' A proud spirit and the fear of God can never agree.

*Reason* 1. Because they know there is no wisdom nor power against the Lord, and so he is to be crept to, not held at defiance, for common wisdom teacheth those who are in danger of others, and under their power, when they know their power and justice, not to carry themselves proudly but humbly towards them. As in Benhadad; so women and friends, who sue to judges for their friends, do petition them submissively. (Chrysostom.)

*Reason* 2. Because it will make every man out of love and liking with all things he hath, and to take no joy in them, or at least no pride in them, when he fears his power who can take them from them in a moment.

*Use* 1. This, as the former, sheweth that many men are destitute of this fear; they are so highly minded, they stand so upon their terms and prerogatives, in most things, not with men, but God; not in small things, but matters of salvation. They stand upon their reputation and esteem amongst men, whenas God calls upon, and sounds an alarm, not to the ear by us, but to their heart and consciences with us, calling them out of their course of life, as their ambitious, lying, deceitful, covetous or carnal, civil course, and submit themselves to the word and to the means of salvation, forsaking such courses, and living humbly, dealing plainly, walking contentedly, having religious and holy conversations; they fear men will mock and scorn at them, and think meanly of them, say they are become superstitious, or turned precise, or they carry themselves otherwise than becometh men of their place and state, like Zedekiah, Jer. xxxviii. 19; like those rulers who believed on Christ, but of a proud and ambitious humour they were ashamed to profess him, John xii. 42, 43. They thought it too base a matter to yield themselves to be governed by so mean a man, as had none almost but a few fishermen to follow after him; so, standing upon the reputation of their estate and places, they refused to submit themselves to the means of salvation, and continued in their damned estate. How many have we like to these in all places, cities, towns, villages, houses, all full of them; as many as there are, so many have we that yet have not this servile fear.

*Use* 2. Particularly, every man may try himself whether he hath this fear or no; where this *timor* is, there is not *tumor*, saith Bernard; there this fear hath pierced that bladder, and let out all the wind in it. Thou art grown humble and lowly, and standest not upon the reputation or estimation of men, so thou mayest do what God commands when he calls to any duty; but if thou doest, there is no fear in thee. For instance, thou hast in the time of thy ignorance or profaneness, either when thou wast a servant, defrauded thy master to get a stock to set up by, as is the custom of divers; or, being free and in trade, thou hast deceived and defrauded many men, and the treasures of wickedness are yet in thy house. Thou comest to the church, thou hearest the word, the Lord smites by the sword of his mouth, and calls for this, that thou with speed make restitution; thou will not do it, why? Thou standest upon thy credit, for if thou make open restitution, then thou shalt be accounted a fraudulent and deceitful man, and everybody will cast it in thy teeth upon any breach; if

privately, thy credit will so sink, for thou art not able to drive a trade as before, and to maintain thyself, wife, and children. Know this, thou art void of this servile fear while thine heart is so full of pride that it will not stoop to God and his commandment; for if thou fearedst his power and justice thou wouldst not stand upon this reputation with men. Can he not make thy wickedness known to thy shame? and can he not make thee as poor to thy dishonour? If thou didst fear this, thou wouldst never stand upon that. The like may be said of men who make profession of conversion and religion, and yet neglect the duties of it, for fear of the scorns and reproaches of men, and stand upon reputation; they have no fear. But if thou canst be content to hazard thy credit to obey him that gives credit, and honour, and riches to whom he will, and takes them from [whom] he pleaseth, it will prove to thyself and to others that thou hast this fear at least, what else may be more? if not, then the contrary, for there can be no place for fear where the heart is puffed up with pride. To obey God in honourable things, and things to be done without cross or hazard of credit, is but to serve themselves.

The fifth effect of this fear is diligence and carefulness, that is, it will never let a man rest till he have used all the means whereby he may have any hope to escape that which he is afraid of. Instance for the fear of man in Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 6, &c.; manifest in Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 27, Exod. ix. 20, Acts ii. 37, Acts ix. 6. Ninevites.

*Reason* 1. Because this fear is credulous, makes a man believe that will come which is threatened, and that such things are not scarecrows; but if they be not prevented, they will come, and suspects often more than is uttered. Now that men believe, they use means to compass it, if good; to avoid it, if evil; if good, hope for it; if evil, fear it, and so seek to avoid it.

*Reason* 2. Because fear breeds a desire; whether a man fear he shall not enjoy some good he would have, or lest some evil should come upon him he would escape; the desire to have, and the desire to escape is increased by his fear. He that fears neither, may have some desire, but when fear comes it increaseth his desire; yea, as the fear increaseth, so doth this. Now a desire, and a desire enlarged, gives a man no rest till he use the means to have or escape; desire is never without endeavour for it or against it, to use all the means known unto the desirer.

*Use* 1. This, as the other two, argues great want of this fear, because men are so secure, and use no means at all to avoid God's judgments, here or to come, or use them carelessly and coldly, which must needs prove want of fear. When they hear that no adulterer, usurer, blasphemer, or any that loves and lies in any sin, shall inherit heaven, but shall have their portion in the burning lake, without faith and repentance, which can never be had but by diligent and careful hearing of the word, this they contemn or regard not; if it come not to them, well; they will not seek after it; if these fall into their mouths, well it is; but otherwise they will never trouble themselves further about either of them. For if they be elected they are sure to be saved, and therefore they will leave all to God's disposition. Thus some say desperately, but more deal thus, and shew plainly there is no fear of God in their hearts or before their eyes, for that would keep another manner of coil in them, and would not suffer them to sleep so securely in sin, never regarding what became of themselves. If they had this we should not need to threaten the wrath of God, nor to excite them to fly from the wrath to come, and by well-doing to seek honour and immortality. And we should need less to do it, or at least we should more prevail with them, for then works the hammer when the iron and metal is mollified and softened by the fire; then the word, when men are softened and mollified by this fear, then the word is most regarded, when the heart is wakened by the present feeling or fear of judgment to come. Questionless the general security that hath overgrown the whole body of our people, that they neither seek to escape the vengeance to come of themselves, nor yet when the ministers of God do with one consent threaten them; though many Johns have preached for a long time that the axe is laid to the root of the tree, yet they come not to enquire what to do, as the people did, Luke iii. 9, 10. Our age, as Chrysostom observed, is like to the old world; our cities, like Sodom and Gomorrah, still secure. The plague of God that was upon our houses and persons hath not wakened them, the sword that was even at our heels hath not made them shake off security and begin to fear. What is this but a fearing of some judgment that will make our hearts to ache, and the ears of posterity to tingle when it shall be told them? According to that of Jer. ii. 19; 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy turnings back shall reprove thee; know therefore and behold that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.' Yea, finally (to knit this to our present matter), what proves this else but that the men of our times are so far from the truth of Christianity, howsoever they profess themselves to be Christians, that they are not come so far as yet to be God's servants, worse than servants, yea, than beasts, yea, than Satan, James ii., who 'believes and trembles.'

*Use* 2. This may teach every man to try whether he have this fear or no. Fear breeds carefulness to avoid that is feared, or is and ought to be fearful. Doth any man hear of the judgments of God sounded out many ways by the words and works of God; is he careless of them for himself, for his family; if he have a charge and possessed with the security of the age, not seeking all means to avoid them, not as the masters of the families, Exod. ix. 20, 'Such, then, as

feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses.' But as Gedaliah, when it was told him by many the danger by Ishmael, he believed it not, and so would not prevent it, Jer. xl. 14, 16, and saith, the Lord will do no such thing, and so will not take the means to avoid them, thou hast not so much as this fear. And dost thou think thyself a good Christian, when thou goest not so far as carnal, natural, yea, heathen men have done? But is any otherwise affected when the ministers threaten, when God thunders, and shews some manifest proof or sign of an approaching evil? Is it to thee like as Delilah's voice was to Samson, 'The Philistines are upon thee,' making thee flee out of the lap of thy pleasures, and all the delights of thy sins, in making thee to seek all means possible to avoid the evil to come, by hearing, believing, repenting, and such like? Then hast thou this fear; which though it be not a purging fear yet is it a restraining fear; not a saving fear and grace itself, yet it makes way for that which never comes before. Endeavour for it, and strive to adjoin the other, that thou mayest begin a servant, proceed to a son, and so at length abide in God's house for ever, John viii. 35.

*Saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests.* In God's accusation we have seen the ground and the reason of it. We are now to proceed to the accusation itself: and here, first, the accuser, God; secondly, the accused, priests; thirdly, the crime. It is not the prophet who accuseth them, who might haply be suspected to have done it on some humour and heat, and some sinister respect; but the Lord himself, which the prophet affirms, to strike more reverence in them to his message, and to affect them to look to their ways; and he is called the Lord of hosts, who can easily punish all their ways, having all at his command.

For the second, the persons accused are the priests, yet not excluding the people, as before the people were accused by name and the priests included; and the priests are alone expressed, not that they sin alone, but being chief and greatest sinners, because the people might extenuate their fault by ignorance and by pleading example of priests; but the priests could have no excuse, and the priests' duty was to reprove others for profaning God's worship, and give examples; and therefore by negligence and impiety teaching the people to be profane they are justly here accused.

*Doct.* Ministers, as well as others, are liable to be checked and reproved by the word.

*Doct.* Such as the priests are, such commonly the people are; and therefore all are reproved in their name.

*Doct.* The ministers specially, and in general all who have the charge of others (to make the doctrine more general), ought both to teach and do, be an example both in word and deed.

*Doct.* The sins of every man are so much the more grievous, the more they cross the main end of his particular calling and profession; as in these priests, which was to see the honour of God duly regarded. For the common people, it is not so much that they make light of God's honour; but for the priest, as it was not to be expected, so not endured, the contempt of God's name a great deal the more grievous sin, because it was clean contrary to the end of their profession; and so in all other men, as treachery in friends, their profession being fidelity. Micah vii. 5–7, Eccles. x. 5, the error or the wrong is so much the more grievous that it cometh from the ruler or judge, who ought to do nothing but just. 2 Cor. xi. 26, St Paul reckoning up his dangers, he reserved the last for the worst, in perils among false brethren. Cant. i. 5, the church accuseth and complaineth only of her own mother's sons, as if they only had offered her the wrong, and yet who knows not what hard measure was done to her in all ages, by tyrants on the one side as lions, and by heretics on the other as dragons? But passing by them, complaineth only of those who seemed to be of the same body; other injuries affected her nothing so much as this. Gen. iii. 12, Job ii. 9, the serpent, the devil doing it, was nothing in respect that the women, their wives, their own flesh, given as helps for them and comforts to them, should be hinderers and destroyers.

*Reason* 1. Because where a man is bound to the duty by more reasons and bonds, there the breach of it must needs be more heinous and the greater; whenas every one then is bound as a man, more as a Christian, but more when he hath a special profession for it; this threefold cord binding the harder, makes the breach the more grievous.

*Reason* 2. Because those things come commonly unexpected, and that which is unexpected and unsuspected it cometh always more suddenly, it lighteth more heavily, and is taken more to heart. This made David complain so much of the injury of a friend, as a thing that came so unexpected, and did so pierce him, Ps. lv. 12. And so may God say and complain of us.

*Reason* 3. Because everything, the further it is out of his place, the more irksome and troublesome it is. As it is a rule in nature that the elements do not weigh heavy in their own places; as in water, a man diving under it finds no weight, but a small quantity in a vessel is more than he can go under; the reason, because before it was in its own place, now it is out of it, in the place of another element: so in this, vice is nothing so offensive when in its own sea and subject as when it is in the place of a contrary virtue.

*Use* 1. Hence we observe, that as all sins are not equal, so not the same sins are equal when they are performed by several parties, and men of several professions. For instance, ignorance is a sin, but one man's ignorance is greater than another, not of private men only, because their means of knowledge by education, or living in the place of instruction, are or

have been divers, but the ignorance of the minister more than the people; for ignorance is in his proper place in the people, but for the priests and prophets to be ignorant, that should be instructors of others, where ignorance is in the seat of knowledge, here it is the more heinous. And though both shall fall into the ditch, yet more shall be his torments. So for injustice, for a man to be robbed by a professed thief, or to be wronged by a judge. So for deceit, to be cheated by a man that lives by his wits, is not so much as to be deceived by one that he traffics and trades with, who professeth to deal honestly and uprightly. So for unfaithfulness in an enemy, it is not so much as in his professed friend. So the same sins in the church are more heinous than out of it; of protestants than papists, for these profess all against them, but they profess unfaithfulness, treachery, deceit, murders, treasons, against every heretic, because he is *ipso facto* excommunicated, and needs but the pope's excommunication for more declaration of it, and more certainty, as Thomas *in Summa*, and bans upon it.

*Use* 2. To teach every man, as to avoid all sins as heinous and displeasing unto God, so as more heinous those which are against the main end of his calling wherein God hath placed him. As the minister must labour against ignorance, idleness, suffering his gifts to decay, not increasing his talent, and he must endeavour to search and beat out the simple and sincere sense of God's word and will, and impart it unto the people to bring them to life eternal; for it is a heinous sin for him to be ignorant, or to 'handle the word deceitfully' or corruptly, as St Paul speaks, or to 'wrest' the sense of it, as St Peter speaks, to their purposes. And so as it is Isa. iii. 12, 'They that lead thee cause thee to err.' So the lawyer must not use unfaithfulness or cunning dealing; he must search out the proper grounds of the law to direct his client to proceed warrantably, to see his wrongs redressed, or recover his right; for, for him to spend his time in devising quirks and distinctions which may serve to obscure the truth, and make contentions and suits rather than end any, or to delay his client's cause when he may well haste it and bring it to an issue; and as many do use their cunning to this purpose, it is the greater sin in them. So a physician and a surgeon must employ all his skill to cure; for him to defer, and sometimes to help forwards and then pull backwards again, to make gain of his patient, and empty his purse, and hurt his body, is very heinous, both of them worse than thieves by the highway, making God's ordinance a cover for their theft, not so punishable by human laws, but as culpable before God, and shall as severely be punished. So if a son omit the honour due to his father, or a servant the fear due to his master, [it] is a greater sin: for others to do it to the same men is not so heinous. So it is the duty of a wife to be a helper, that she must endeavour in all things; for, for her to be as Eve, who was given as a comfort to make Adam's life more joyous, for her to be a broker to bring death, she that was taken from him as part to be shot at him as a dart, to the wounding and murdering of his soul, as Basil speaketh; or for her, who was taken out of his side, to guard and hem in his heart, to be a ladder to the devil to scale the heart of her husband, as Gregory speaketh of Job's wife, was more heinous than when the serpent and devil did it, who were professed enemies, and so now being directly against the end of her creation and calling. And so of all; they are thus to think of their sins, and thus to avoid them.

*That despise my name.* The sin they are accused of is contempt of his worship, not the omitting of it or the not doing of it at all, but the doing of it corruptly, carelessly, and contemptuously. The *name* of God signifies, first, himself; secondly, his properties; thirdly, his commands or his authority; fourthly, his works; fifthly, his word and worship, which is here meant, and which they not only omitted, which might be through ignorance or some forcible temptation, but contemned or despised, for many could not pretend ignorance, and at this time there was no persecution to compel them to dishonour God; but many did it out of a base conceit they had of God's majesty, thinking any kind of service would serve the turn. The word signifies to trample under feet, as we do vile things, Mat. v. 13, 2 Kings ix. 33; but did the priests do thus? Ribera answereth, Things are oft said to be done which are intended to be done, because nothing is wanting in them why it should not be done who have a will to have it done.

*Doct.* Contempt of God's name,—that is, when men do indeed the works of God's worship and service, but do them negligently, carelessly, and contemptuously, thinking if the deed be done it is enough, but how for the manner it matters not greatly;—it is a grievous sin; manifest, that it is here made the grand sin of this people, and these priests, for which the burden is threatened in the beginning, and many particular judgments afterwards. This people did the work of the Lord, brought their sacrifices, but they did it carelessly and contemptuously, brought anything, as thinking it good enough. This was one difference betwixt Abel and Cain, though faith was the main; yet how careful the one was, that thought the best was bad enough: the other, the worst would serve, for he brought a sacrifice, Gen. iv. 3, 4. Hence are the qualities of the sacrifices described in the law, God requiring not only sacrifices, but such as were perfect without blemish, Lev. xxii. 20–23, Deut. xvii. 1. But why this, but to shew how he requires the manner of doing as well as the deed, and that he cannot endure corruption here? Hence Saul laboured to lessen the fault, because they saved the chiefest for the Lord, 1 Sam. xv. 15; hence is that Mal. i. 14, which we shall see hereafter.

*Reason* 1. Because this argues a great contempt of God, and, as we may speak, of his person; for when

any man is respected either for love or fear, there the offices and duties that are performed about him are done neither negligently nor carelessly, but with all diligence. The wife that loves her husband, the child that honours his father, the servant that fears his master, do their duties with all diligence and care. Where the duties are done of course, and coldly, there is not the respect of the person that should be. So it is in our carriage towards God.

*Reason* 2. Because it is gross hypocrisy when men do thus perform the act, and yet their hearts and affections are far remote, and so are no living sacrifices, but only dead carcases, such as must needs stink in the nostrils of God; yea, and thus honouring him they do dishonour him, Isa. xxix. 13. St Salvian, speaking of such as worship God corruptly, saith: *Non tam manis criminis fuisset ad templum Domini non venire, quàm sic venire; quia Christianus qui ad ecclesiam non venit, negligentiæ reus est; qui autem venit, sacrilegii; minoris enim piaculi reus est, si honor Deo non deferatur; quam si irrogetur injuria: ac per hoc quicunque ista fecerunt, non dederunt honorem Deo, sed derogaverunt.**

*Use* 2. This being such a sin argues the age we live in guilty of a great deal of sin before the Almighty; his worship is performed, but yet contemned marvellously amongst us. As they brought the sacrifices, so do we the works, but so corruptly and carelessly that he speaks to us ministers and people, 'Ye despise my name.' The word is preached and heard, prayers are made, sacraments are delivered and received, but, alas! so carelessly, cursorily, and customably, that it is but the contempt of them, and the contempt of God in them. How many ministers preach the word but for gain, for vain-glory, for law, and for custom, and not of conscience; as law and customs bind them, when they have gifts and body able to do it oftener to the edifying of the church; some in preaching make it serve their own turn, and serve themselves out of it and not God! How many hearers that hear for law or custom, that being present, sleep, or suffer their eyes to steal away their hearts, or let their souls and minds be possessed with their several fears, joys, pleasures, profits, that they are present in body and absent in mind, thinking yet that is good enough for the Lord. For prayer, how many ministers run it over like journey-works, without affection and zeal, making the people to abhor the sacrifice of the Lord! How many of the people come late, carry themselves without all reverence, sitting gazing, reading, and such like, and there is no fault, all is well enough! The like may be said of sacraments; any preparation, any affection good enough (but of the particulars more afterwards). How many that defer the service of God till they be old, till the even; the morning and fresh thoughts of themselves and servants for the world, for their chapmen, not for God; drowsy prayers, spirits spent, good enough for him! Here I may apply that of Seneca,* He who defers to be good till he be old, shews plainly he would not give himself to virtue if he were fit for anything else. So of both these and their like, who shew therein the contempt of God's name, thinking anything good enough for him.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to labour to see and know himself guilty of this sin, to humble himself for it, and to repent of it as of one of his great sins. Now, there is no repentance where there is perseverance in it, when it is not left and the former good done; for, as he verily is wicked that is not just, he is ungrateful that is not thankful, so doth he despise that doth not honour God. The contrary evil is ever where the good is not where and when it ought to be; therefore must every one labour for the good, that is, to honour God; not to do the things and works of his service only, but to do them as his service should be done, being more careful for the heart and affection, which God more respects than the action, thinking not, as hypocrites, anything is good enough, but that nothing is sufficient. As Paul, 'Who is sufficient?' so what is sufficient? What care, diligence, endeavour of the heart, and whole man? It is not the omitting of the worship of God, nor the neglect to leave some things undone, that is only displeasing unto the Lord; but when the act is done, he may be as much offended. As here, the not offering of the sacrifice was not the thing that displeased him; but when the sacrifices were not so qualified as they ought, that he accounted contempt, because it argued contempt. So in this; the quality of the service is that which he accounts contempt, when they thought the deed was enough. The outward work must be done, as the sacrifice ought by them to have been offered. So God hath commanded, so must example be given to others; but the intention, the heart, is that which must make it acceptable unto God, as Gregory.

*And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?* Here is their excuse and defence, in which they add more impiety to their former profaneness. They put God to his proofs, and seem to charge him for accusing them unjustly. They stand upon their defence, 'Wherein have we, &c.? We have highly thought of thy name, and spoken of thee most religiously; why, then, are we accused? But observe we God's reply.

Ver. 7. *Ye offer unclean bread upon mine altar; and you say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is not to be regarded.*

*Ye offer unclean bread upon my altar.* Here is God's reply to their defence. They who offer polluted things to God, despise his name; but such are you, for ye offer polluted bread upon my altar; where we must examine the sense of three words; first, *altar;* secondly, *bread;* thirdly, *polluted* or unclean.

* De Gubern, Dei, lib. viii.

* Qui ut bonus sit in senectutem differt, apertè ostendit, se nolle virtuti dare, nisi tempus ad omnia alia inidoneum. —*Seneca.*

*First*, By the *altar*. There are some, and not of the meanest, who understand in this place the table of shew-bread that stood in the temple and tabernacle, just over against the candlestick on the north side, and the right hand of it. In the tabernacle there were three distinct places: the tabernacle, the holy place, and the most holy. The table of shew-bread was in the second, whither the priests only came. By the altar then is understood the altar of burnt-offerings, which stood in the outward court, whither both priest and people came, and had like access when the law was read, and their daily sacrifices were offered. And thus doth Theodoret and Cyril understand it upon this place; so that we expound not this by that which is in the end of the verse, but that by this, because we find in the Scripture the table put often for the altar, but not the altar for the table.

*Secondly*, By *bread*. Some understand only the shew-bread, as Jerome; some, of bread which was offered with the burnt-offering on the altar, Lev. vi. 20, Num. xxviii. 6; some, not of the bread only, but of the flesh also, or whatsoever thing else was offered there upon the altar, which is the best acceptation, for the word here used signifies not bread alone, but also other victual and meat, as it is used in the word, and as Cyril expoundeth this place, and some other, for the bread of the sacrifice; and especially the prophet himself, ver. 8, when he shews that he meant the sacrifices and meat that was offered upon the altar.

*Thirdly*, By *unclean*, what is meant. It is agreed of by most, that it is not anything that is unclean by nature, or naturally; that is, such a thing as is abominable to human sense, as Ezek. iv. 12, 13, nor yet anything that is unclean morally; as all things are said to be morally vile and polluted, that God doth disallow and dislike of; *nullum cadaver tam fœdum aut fœtidum* (as Gregory saith), to us, as the sinner's soul in the sight of God. But it is mystically unclean, that is, in regard of some mystical signification, God having pronounced them typically unclean, to instruct some further matter, that thereby he would inure men the rather to abhor them. And thus are all things said to be unclean which are prohibited in the law ceremonial; and so it is in this place. But these things were either unclean by others, or of themselves: in the first, by touching a dead corpse, or any unclean thing; in the second, either in their kind, as Isa. lxvi. 17, or in quality only, that is, when it comes by some accident, of which Deut. xvii. 1. Of this is meant in this place, as the 8th verse sheweth.

And so here seems to be a double fault taxed by the Spirit of God; one in the people, and the other in the priests, and so a double duty exacted of them. The people's fault was in bringing of polluted offerings, and presenting them unto the priests; their duty was to have brought such as were sound, entire and perfect. The priest's fault was in receiving them at their hands, and not reproving and prohibiting them; his duty was to have instructed them what sacrifice they were to bring, and to reject that which was unclean, and not according to the law. Now, these sacrifices were to be clean, and pure, and perfect, *ad typum capitis*, to shew the perfect purity of Christ's human nature, 2 Cor. v. 21, 1 Peter i. 17. Secondly, *ad typum corporis*, to shew what they should be who are members of him, and that offer these sacrifices unto God; that they should be 'perfect to every good work,' 2 Tim. iii. 17, and Rom. xii. 1, 3. So that then, besides that which hath been spoken for the sacrifice, we may gather out of the people's fault (comparing outward things with inward) the type with the truth, that seeing God reasons on this sort, if they who bring polluted offerings unto me contemn me, then such as come polluted in themselves much more.

*Doct.* They who come to the public service of God, and come to offer him any sacrifice, must not be unclean and polluted in their hearts and lives, but must come with holiness and purity; for if their sacrifice must be such, then themselves; and the sacrifices were commanded to be such, because they themselves ought to be such. When God reproved Israel for it, Isa. i. and lxvi. 3, and Jer. vii. 9, 10, he sheweth what he required of them, and of others. To this purpose is Ps. iv. 4, 5; Gen. xxxv. 2; Joshua xxiv. 16, 19, 23.

*Reason* 1. Because God else will not accept their service; for he first looks to their person, and then their service, Gen. iv. 4; for the sacrifice doth not sanctify the person, but the person it, as Haggai ii. 13, 14; Prov. xv. 8.

*Reason* 2. Because else that which God offers and gives to them, is made hurtful unto them; not that God gives any evil, but because they are evil that receive it. As the sacrament to Judas, Christ gave not that which was evil; nor did he, being the physician, give the poison; but Judas being wicked, it became evil unto him; for as the spider and the adder turn good meat into poison, and as a corrupt stomach, abounding with choler and such like, turneth the meat they eat into choler, and the finer the meat is it is the sooner turned to corruption, so it is in this thing: Titus i. 15, 'Unto the pure are all things pure; but unto them that are undefiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure, but even their minds and consciences are defiled.'

*Use* 1. To reprove all such as have no care to purge and purify themselves before they come unto the house of God to his service, that come without repentance, without preparation, full of their drunkenness, whoredoms, usuries, adulteries, and such like sins. They are more guilty of contempt against the Lord, than if they withdrew themselves altogether from his obedience and house. A man having committed some offence against his prince, and being summoned to appear personally in his presence, if he refuse to come at him, and shun his sight, may well be condemned of contumacy, but not of contempt, for he may do it out

of fear; and contempt and fear cannot stand together in one subject; but if he shall confidently come and appear before him, as if he had done no such thing, or not offended him, shew no sorrow for his offence, make no promise of amendment, nay, shall rather stand in it, and with an impudent face avow it, and profess to persist in it, this must needs be judged a gross and outrageous contempt. Now the place of God's worship is his presence; and he that cometh thither, cometh to look God full in the face, as Cain was cast out from the face of the Lord, Gen. iv. 16. If he come not, he shall suffer as *contumax*, as rebellious and disobedient; but he that cometh polluted, with the filth of his sin unrepented of, with a purpose to persist, he shall be punished as a contemner. They who refused to come were shut out, but he that came in his old clothes was bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, Mat. xxii. He that is wilfully absent, excluding himself from the society of the saints in the time of grace, shall be barred their company in the time of glory for ever; but he that presumeth to appear there, with the guilt of his sin on him, shall have a far greater portion in hell fire; he shall suffer as in case of contempt, like an insolent rebel, that bourdeth his prince to his face in his own palace. And in the mean time all their prayers are unaccepted; yea, they are turned into sin to them, they obtain nothing of God more than he would give them though they never prayed, with which he feeds them but for the slaughter; yea, and hence we profit not them by preaching, but make them worse; we are not the savour of life unto them, but of death by the word. They are hardened in their sins; by this two-edged sword they are daily wounded. Because their sins are not wounded, their persons are, and the more fearfully, because their wounds are not sensible; yea, by the sacraments, the devil, as upon Judas, so upon them, taketh more sure possession and reigns in them.

*Use* 2. To teach every one to labour to be holy when he cometh to God's house. Holiness becomes it; to put away iniquity and sin far from him, when God calls him; casts off his patched cloak, as did blind Bartimeus, Mark ix. We deal so when we go before princes, as Joseph did, Gen. xli. 14; much more we ought to do so with God. Moses and Joshua were commanded to put off their shoes when they approached to God, and were to stand upon holy ground. We are hereby taught, saith Ambrose, Ep. xvi., to shake off the dust, and scour off the soil that our souls and lives gathered by fleshly occasions and worldly courses, ere we come to tread the courts of God's house. There was a laver of brass, Exod. xxx. 18, 19, for Aaron and his sons to wash in before they offered anything at the altar, to shew what we should do, being made the Lord's priests. To this David alluded: Ps. xxvi. 6, 'I will wash mine hands in innocency, O Lord, and compass thine altar.' And this ought we to do, that our prayers may be heard and be acceptable, that our hearing and receiving of the sacraments may be fruitful unto us; else, Ps. lxvi. 18, 'If I regard wickedness in mine heart, the Lord will not hear me;' and we being corrupt, this must needs be hurtful unto us, unless we learn that wisdom from the serpent, to cast our poison before we come to drink.

Out of the people's fault (comparing outward things with inward, the type with the truth) we have gathered that the people that bring offerings to God, they who perform any service to him, ought to be holy and pure; for if their sacrifice, much more they. Now out of the priest's fault we may gather, that if they ought to reject unclean and unfit sacrifices, then those also who brought them, being unclean; yea, they ought to put a difference, and to distinguish betwixt the clean and unclean, to receive the one and refuse the other, as Lev. x. 10; and so from the proportion we may gather some observation for our times.

*Doct.* The ministers of the gospel and New Testament ought to make difference betwixt the godly and the wicked, as much as lieth in them; to accept and receive the one, and to reject and exclude the other from the public prayers of the church, from the sacred table of Christ. Hence is the command to the church of Corinth, and to the pastor as the principal man, 2 Cor. v. 13; Jer. xv. 19. The liturgy of our church commendeth Ambrose, then bishop of Milan, for dealing so with the emperor himself, Theodosius the younger, till he shewed himself sorry for his sins; so 1 Tim. i. 20.

*Reason* 1. Because if they under the law, priests and prophets ought to do it, much more they in the gospel. For as many things were then tolerable which now are not, because, saith Augustine, many things are tolerated in the darkness and dawning, which are not in the day when the sun is up; so must it follow, that that which was not tolerable then, cannot be now.

*Reason* 2. Because by their continuance and suffering them, and not censuring them, they may by many means be hurtful, and infect the clean and holy, these being more capable of the other's evil, than they are able to communicate their good to them. As health is not so communicable as contagion, 1 Cor. v. 6, then if they desire to keep them whole from pollutions, they must separate the wicked, as shepherds, saith Chrysostom, separate the infected and scabbed from the whole.

*Obj.* Christ admitted Judas to the supper, a devil, after he knew he had taken money to betray him.

*Ans.* First, it is denied that he was admitted to it; but say he did, as to the passover, yet this follows not that a minister must not, as much as in him lieth, exclude the wicked. For, first, this was a hidden sin, not open, but smothered and kept close. Christ took notice of it by his divine power, not human nature. Now the exclusion is for known sins, not secret;

those must be left to God's judgment, and this crosseth not the excluding for known sins; and it is probable that our Saviour admitted him to the passover, because his hypocrisy was not yet unmasked; whereas after, when he had unmasked him by giving the sop to him (as St Hilary well observeth), and so made him known, what he was, to the rest, he sent him out of the way, while he celebrated the new passover.

*Use* 1. This sheweth what manner of men they ought to be, who must exclude and shut out others; if not without sin, yet without open scandal and blame, as St Jerome, *Sine crimine, non sine peccato.* Hence was it ordained that whosoever of the priests or Levites had erred, and been defiled by idolatry in the time of the captivity, or of any of the idolatrous princes, and so became a scandal, should not serve any more in the temple: Ezek. xliv. 10, 12, 13, 15, 'Neither yet the Levites are gone back from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray from me after their idols; but they shall bear their iniquity. Because they served before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lift up mine hand against them, saith the Lord God, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of the priest unto me, neither shall they come near unto any of my holy things, in the most holy place; but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. But the priests of the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near me to serve me, and they shall stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God;' 2 Kings xxiii. 9. And this the church after Christ did observe; for Cyprian, Epist. ii. 1, mentioneth a canon made by him and other of the bishops of Africa, that no bishop or priest that had been ordained in the church, and after either had fallen into heresy, or been touched with idolatry, should be received again upon their repentance, otherwise than as laymen; and Epist. i. 7, he chideth Fortunatianus, who once was a bishop, and had in the time of persecution burned incense to idols, and after came home again to the church, and would have kept his place still. *Audet sibi sacerdotium quod prodidit vendicare, quasi post aras diaboli ad altare Dei fas sit accedere,* &c.? Dares he challenge that office or priesthood which he hath betrayed, as if it were lawful, after he hath served at the idol-stool of the devil, to draw near to God's altar? Novatianus and Novatus made a schism from the church, because one Trophimus, a priest, with some other, were received, after they had fallen for fear in those horrible times. Cyprian answereth, Epist. iv. 2, *Susceptus est Trophimus, sic tamen admissus, ut laicus communicet, non quasi locum sacerdotis usurpet*: Trophimus is indeed received, but admitted only into the place where laymen communicate, not into the place of a priest. All teach that such should not be received; for what if Peter and Paul (the example of the one, and the calling of the other extraordinary) were received, yet the equity is great, that those who must judge the leprosy of others, should be free from it themselves, or if they be not, should be expelled as Uzziah, when the leprosy once sprung out of his forehead. And that the church should not receive popish priests to be ministers at God's table, besides that it is like to be hurtful, because the mystery of iniquity works thus cunningly, as they, Ezra iv. 2, 'They came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief fathers, and said unto them, We will build with you; for we seek the Lord your God as you do, and we have sacrificed unto him since the time of Esar-haddon, king of Ashur, which brought us up hither;' to whom answer should be, ver. 3, 'Then Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel said unto them, It is not for you, but for us to build the house unto our God; for we ourselves together will build it unto the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us.' If they have parts of learning, it were fit they should be employed other ways than in the ministry, to the scandal and hurt of many.

*Use* 2. To admonish the ministers of their duty, that they would, as much as they have any power in their hands, reject and exclude the wicked, and not receive them (as John would not the Pharisees and Sadducees) till they confess their sins, and so give some testimony of their repentance. But yet this must not be done upon every small infirmity or hidden sin, but for heinous sins, that are contagious in respect of the quality of them, and are scandalous in regard of the openness of them; for hidden sins must be left to the judgment of God, and infirmities must be otherwise dealt withal, mildly, and with less censures, Gal. vi. 1, 3, 4; secret sins secretly reproved, Mat. xviii., only public sins to be publicly censured, and the offender to be excluded. And yet not at first, but as in the matter of the leper, so he must not presently expel him the church, but admonish him the first and second time, Titus iii. 10, 11, and then expel him if he persist obstinately in it, this being the last censure and the greatest, as physicians seek all means to cure, before they cut off a member.

*Use* 3. For the people to learn to submit themselves to the censure of the ministers of the church (as Heb. xii. 17, 'Obey them that have the oversight of you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give accounts, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable unto you'), to do as they say, and be ruled by their censure; and that, first, for their own good, 1 Cor. v. 5, be 'delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;' for even excommunication is the church's medicine: *excommunicatio est medicina*

*ecclesiæ*. It casts not off from the whole church, but from a particular congregation or one visible church, to keep him from infecting others, and to recover him from his own corruption. The not yielding is the rebelling against Christ, who hath so commanded his; and not carrying his yoke here, is to deprive themselves of the crown there; yea, when they are cut off from a particular church, to persist and contend, it is to cut themselves off from the whole; whereas to submit and to seek the effect of it is their good, as it was Onesimus his. And as a bone that is broken, if it be well set, groweth stronger again, so is it with them.

*Doct.* They who have the charge of others, by God committed unto them, are guilty of the offences that are committed by them, if they be not careful to censure them for them; so is it here, Ezek. xxxiii. 8, and ver. 9, 'When I shall say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt die the death: if thou doest not speak and admonish the wicked of his way, that wicked man shall die for his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.' Yea, the magistrates do sin in not punishing, Neh. xiii. 17, 2 Sam. iii. 38, 39; and for this it is thought that law was made, Num. xxxv. 31, 'Ye shall take no recompence for the life of the murderer, which is worthy to die, but he shall be put to death.' For by that he should give others encouragement to kill, and make also the sin his own; yea, and as the people's sins are the ministers' and magistrates', so the children's sins are the parents': 1 Sam. ii. 29, 'Wherefore hast thou kicked against my sacrifice and my offering, which I commanded in my tabernacle, and honourest thy children above me, to make yourselves fat with the first-fruits of all the offerings of Israel my people?' said the Lord to Eli, when yet his sons only were guilty.

*Reason* 1. Because every man is commanded to reprove his brother, his friend: Lev. xix. 17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but thou shalt plainly rebuke thy neighbour, and suffer him not to sin.' If he may not bear with the faults of his friends, less of children, servants, subjects, people, where not only the general charge is in the command, but a special one also, and so the twofold cord binds them.

*Reason* 2. Because every man is bound to prevent sin as much as lies in him, specially the sins of his charge; but he that reproves not, corrects not, censures not, punishes not, according to his place, prevents not sin; because every one that scapes without these, or some of these, is hardened, and encouraged to commit other sins, and others of the same condition, by him: servants, subjects, &c.

*Reason* 3. Because they are made keepers of both tables, such as ought to look that both tables should be kept; therefore the command touching them is made the sinews and strength of the other; that if they be obeyed, the other are better kept; if they do their duty, the breaches of the other are better withstood; and therefore some think the law of the ten commandments was given to Moses, the magistrate, for them all, Exod. xix.

*Use* 1. It shews the wretched estate of ministers, magistrates, masters, and parents, if they neglect reproving, correcting, punishing, censuring, as their place requireth; they have their bill of indictment increased against the great day, by the sins of other men.

*Use* 2. This teacheth us that those who have charge of others have a far greater account to make than those who have not; for it is enough for those, if they keep themselves from their own wickedness; the other must be careful to keep others in a good course, and so from sin. The governors must care for those who live under them, the householder for such as are under his roof, the prince for such as are within his realm. It is not enough they serve God themselves, but they must cause others to do likewise, as Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19, and as Joshua, chap. xxiv. 13. The master must look his servant keep the Sabbath; to him is the command, Exod. xx. 10; he must come with his train to the house of God, Ps. xlii. 4; he must prepare himself for the sacrament, and charge his, and sanctify them, Job i. 5; yea, he must correct, censure, and punish, unless he will have their sins fall on him. If he think he have not personal sins enough of his own, let him be herein careless; but he that thinks he hath enough and too many of his own to answer for, let him seek to restrain others committed to his charge by his censures and power, that he may be free from them: which is done two ways, and two things are required of him, that he keep himself free from other men's sins. The first is, to pry and inquire into the lives of those that are committed unto him, into their carriage and behaviour, that he may see what is amiss. It is enough for a private man if he reprove an offender when he seeth him committing sin; he is not bound to inquire and take notice what they do, or curiously to watch over them, but not for a magistrate, minister, &c. He must, Prov. xxvii. 23, 'be diligent to look to the state of his flock, and look well to his herds.' The minister is *episcopus*, a pryer, to signify it is his charge to pry and look to the lives of those who are committed to him; and so ought every particular master of a family, for his house is his diocese, though he may not be ἀλλοτριος ἐπίσκοπος, to meddle in another family, 1 Peter iv. 15. It is not enough for them to take notice of things that are offended in the open view, but they must inquire into their secret carriage. Many imagine they are bound no further than to take notice of open sins, and think ignorance of close crimes will excuse them; but such affected ignorance, when they might have knowledge, increaseth the sin; for they might either prevent it or humble themselves for it, as Job; or reprove them, as Elisha did his servant

2 Kings v., and free themselves from their sin. The second thing is, that they have power to punish, when they cannot prevent. It is enough for a private man, when he sees a sin, to reprove, to bewail it, and pray for him that sinned; but not for him that hath charge. He must use the power of the sword, being a magistrate; of the keys, being a minister; of the rod, being a master, or parent; yea and in obstinacy, disinherit: as Abraham cast out scoffing Ishmael and his mother; and expulse his house, as David said he would purge his house, Ps. ci. And without this can they not keep themselves from the sins of others.

*Use* 3. To teach every inferior, to submit to his superior, or to him that hath charge over him, to be pryed into, reproved, or corrected, as their power is. It is profitable to have an enemy prying, profitable to have a child tell us the cloak hangs awry, as Chrysostom; more profitable to have a friend, of whose faithfulness we doubt not, and whose duty must make us bear with him, as with physicians, though they deal with us very homely.

*And you say, wherein have we polluted thee?* The second reply of this people adding denial to denial; they would not grant that they did so, that they offered polluted bread.

*Doct.* One sin draws on another; the first, a second, that a third, and both a greater. We may say of sin, as Leah said of her son that her maid Zilpah bore Jacob, Gen. xxx. 11, 'a troop cometh.' We see it in our first parents, in David, 2 Sam. xi., in Asa, 2 Chron. xix. 10, in Peter.

*Reason.* Because one sin must serve to bolster and uphold another, or else smother and conceal another. This people thought it a shame, having once denied their fault, not to defend it, and stand out to the utmost. But it is manifest in the example of David, of which Basil thus: the devil, seeing that after the doing of it he was ashamed of what he had done, and willing to hide his shameful wound, he made that shame of his a broker to another sin, and so drew him to draw one ulcer over another; while seeking to cover his adultery with murder, he made him an author, and so guilty of both.

*Use* 1. This ought to teach men not to give place to sin, to any one, great or small, but to resist them all; for, as Prov. xvii. 14, 'The beginning of strife is as one that openeth the waters,' therefore ere the contention be meddled with, leave off. As when a man maketh a way to a current or stream of a river, which (when he hath once let it in to his grounds) he cannot stay again, though he would never so fain, so is the beginning of sin. To give the water passage, is to let the tongue loose, for the careless mind slideth away by degrees till it fall, and he that is not careful of idle and harmless words at the first, cometh soon to wicked and hurtful words at the last (*Greg. past.* 3). The like may be said of other sins. The way to heaven is upward, hard, and difficult; the way to hell is downward. Now he that runneth down a hill cannot stay when he will, or if he set down with himself how far and where he will stay, he is not like to observe it; so in sin, he cannot take up himself when he would, to say thus far and no further I will sin; for the corruption of his nature is as fierce horses, and the devil as the driver; he shall not command himself when he would. Did not David fall from idleness to wantonness, and from adultery to murder; from a filthy sin to a bloody crime? Did not Solomon from excessive buildings, where his sin began, for he was as long again about his own house as he was about God's house, to abundance of wives, and from the love of strange women to the service of strange gods? Did not Asa fall from distrusting God to the imprisoning of God's prophets, and from that to oppressing of his people; yea, from distrusting in God to trust wholly in physicians? And are we better than these? Who was like them in Israel, and what is our strength in comparison of them? It is good, then, that we withstand small sins, and the first.

*Use* 2. If any be overtaken with sin unawares, let him shake it off with speed, lest he come to bind sin to sin, and so shall he be sure not to escape unpunished. Let him labour to rise out of it, and to stay himself; as Job xl. 5, 'Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.' So say thou, Once I have sinned, but I will do no more; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further. And to lessen thy fault, excuse not thine offence, seek no excuses and pretences to cover or colour it, for that will bring thee to be more entangled; the further and longer, the harder it will be to rise; and the smaller the sin is, the harder haply to rise; for he that falls lightly, he makes no great haste to rise again; whereas he that falls hard and foul, he hastens to arise; so in this.* It is Satan's policy not to draw men to great sins at first, but by degrees, lest they should abhor them, before the conscience be inured and somewhat hardened. As the way to good is by degrees, because of the difficulty of it, so to evil, because of the horribleness and shame of it. And by one sin, if it be lived in without repentance, there is left in the heart a more provocation to sin the same sin again; yea, and a greater proneness than before to any other sin whatsoever of the same quality; yea, and of a step or a degree higher. Hay or stubble, or any combustible matter, dried and heated by the sun, soon takes fire; the resisting of humidity is taken away; so in this. For when temptation is offered to some or other sin, that the conscience shall at first seem to make nice of, the corruption of the heart will be ready to make answer and suggest that he may as well, and as safely, do this as the former; there is no more danger in the one than in the other, and there-

* As one saith, beginnings are with more ease and safety declined when we are free, than proceedings when we have begun; so small beginnings than continuance.

fore that it is to no end to make dainty of the one, seeing he is so far engaged in the other. Therefore he that would be free from greater, when the less hath ceased upon him, let him haste, and by true repentance, as by an *ejectione firmæ*, cast him out of possession. Take the foxes when they are little, and if not at first, yet as they come in by little and little, cast them out by little and little; and go back again by degrees, as the sun went back in the dial of Ahaz.

*Use* 3. This may teach every man to account it a mercy and goodness of God to him when he gives a means to prevent his entrance into a sin, or his continuance in it, when he hath slipped aside to any, though but a little one. St Augustine saith that *omne peccatum*, &c. Every sin that God prevented in him, and kept him from committing of it, he accounted no less mercy than if he had pardoned him. And doubtless in this respect the mercy is more; for while that sin was prevented, more and perhaps greater sins were prevented in him. Men are nothing so sensible in this, but it is their corruption, as they are not so sensible of the benefit, being kept from transgressing the law, as getting a pardon after, nor in preventing a disease, as in removing it after. But the mercy is great, whether it be by the voice of a minister, if he open his heart to it, or the voice of a judgment, or the voice of his conscience, or the voice of the Spirit, Isa. xxx. 21. It is a benefit, when a man is settled or secure in his sin, by any of these means to be admonished, as David was by Nathan after he had sinned in numbering the people, and Peter was by Christ after the third denial; though it had been greater if the admonition and prevention had been at the first or second step. So should men esteem it when they are turned, or turning to the right hand or to the left, by pleasure or profit. It is good that God will so admonish them, and prevent this, by whom or howsoever, by public or private means, by good or bad. And let them hearken and obey, and be thankful to the author and the means; as St Bernard speaks,* No word that edifies to godliness, to virtue, and good manners, is to be heard negligently, because there is the way in which is shewed the salvation of God. And a little before, in the same sermon, saith he, † The admonition of the righteous is not to be contemned, which is sin's ruin, the heart's health, and God's way to the soul. And as St Augustine, to the same purpose, of public hearing and admonition,* Let every one hear as he can, and as he is conscious to himself, so let him either grieve being to be corrected, or rejoice being to be approved. If he find that he hath gone astray, let him return, that he may walk in the way; if he find himself in God's way, let him walk on to the end; let no man be proud out of the way, nor slothful in it.

*In that you say.* That is, thus think in your hearts, and this is known to God. It is not likely they were so impious to utter their profane conceits of God's service; but as it is Ps. xiv. 1, xxx. 6.

*Doct.* Not only works and words, but even the thoughts are known to God. The very hearts of men have ears to hear God, and mouths to speak to God. *Corda Deo et aures et os gerunt*, saith St Augustine. As God said to Moses in another case: Exod. xiv. 15, so to the wicked, 'Why criest thou against me?' when haply they speak no word, but only blaspheme God in their hearts, as it is Ps. x. 13.

*The table of the Lord is not to be regarded.* They ask wherein they have despised and polluted God; in that they think basely of his service, they pollute him in polluting his altar. They who think basely of God's board, they contemn and pollute God, whose board it is. By table is understood not that of the shew-bread, but the altar of burnt-offerings; and so is Ezek. xli. 22.

*Doct.* Whatsoever abuse is committed in the worship of God, or against the means of his worship, it is held to be done against God himself. Thus answereth God this people, In polluting my altar you pollute me. The means of God's worship with us are the word, sacraments, and prayer, as the law, sacrifices, and sacrament were with them. Now, then, as the contemning of these were the contemning of him, so is it with us. It is that which is, 1 Cor. xi. 27, to be 'guilty of the body and blood of the Lord'; that is, of a heinous offence committed against his person. He is absent, so was God from the sacrifices, yet he was polluted in them, because they were offered unto him. So is it in these sacraments of ours, because he offereth them unto us as signs of himself. Hence it is, Luke x. 16, 'He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.' And wherefore they more than other men, but for this, because they were the candlesticks that held forth the light, they were they who brought the word to them, and that was it, not for their persons.

*Reason* 1. Because he that denies God all worship and honour, must needs contemn and despise him;

* Nec ullus omnino sermo qui ædificat ad pietatem, ad virtutes, ad mores optimos, negligenter est audiendus, quoniam et illic iter quo ostenditur salutare Dei.—*Bern. in Cant. serm.* 57.

† Si corripuerit me justus in misericordia, id ipsum sentiam, sciens quia æmulatio justi et benevolentia iter faciunt ei qui ascendit super occasum. Bonus occasus, cum ad correptionem justi stat homo, et corruit vitium, et dominus ascendit super illud, conculcans hoc pedibus, et conterens ne resurgat. Non ergo contemnenda increpatio justi, quæ ruina peccati, cordis sanitas est, nec non et Dei ad animam via.—*Bern. ibid.*

* Unusquisque pro modulo suo audiat, et sicut sibi conscius fuerit, ita vel doleat corrigendus, vel gaudeat approbandus. Si se deviâsse invenerit, redeat ut in via ambulet: si se in via invenerit, ambulet ut perveniat. Nemo sit superbus extra viam, nemo piger in via.—*Aug. in Ps* 31, *præfat.*

but he that contemns the means doth deny it him, for he will have none but by the means he hath appointed, all others are things he abhors. And this we may observe from Micah vi. 6–8.

*Reason* 2. Because he delighteth to magnify his word, Isa. xlii. 21; and to be magnified above all things by his word, Ps. cxxxviii. 2. Then the contempt of it must needs be the contempt of him.

*Reason* 3. Because he hath given unto them things that are proper to himself, which argues he would exalt them, and takes their disgrace to himself. To the word it is given to save and to destroy, and to judge; when it is he that doth it by it, James i. 21, John xii. 47, 48. The passover is called Christ, and Christ it, 1 Cor. v. 7, x. 16, xi. 24. Baptism is said to save us, Tit. iii. 5, and such like. It must then be the dishonouring of him to dishonour them.

*Use* 1. This proves that our times and age are full of many contemners of God, because we have so many contemners of the means of his worship, the word, prayer, and sacraments. To say nothing of atheists that are amongst us, who make a scoff at all things, and make the word man's invention, and such like; to pass by our papists, who account the word hard, difficult, insufficient, the cause of error and heresies; I say to pass by these, in the number of protestants who would go for good Christians, are many who contemn the Lord, there is such contempt from them in the means of his worship; sundry ways and in sundry manners they contemn; they have too much of this light food, their souls loathe it. Some men like the words only in a new teacher, and can never long tie their ear to any, no, not their own pastor; like those that like any meat better abroad than at home, though more wholesome and better dressed. It were infinite to descend to all particulars. How many contemn the word and sacraments, prayer, and preaching, when they have nothing near so much care to prepare themselves to the hearing, or receiving, or performing them, as they have for the coming to their own table!

*Use* 2. To take heed how we use and account of the means of God's worship, Luke viii. 18.

*The table of the Lord is not to be regarded.* The reason they thought thus basely of the table of the Lord was because the blood and fat poured upon the altar were things but base and vile in themselves; so they thought of the worship of God itself, not considering for what end God had appointed these things to be done, and what spiritual use they were to make of them.

*Doct.* The main cause and original of the common contempt and neglect of holy things is because men fix their eyes only on the outward means, and regard not the end and use of them, and the grace and blessing of God accompanying those base means that he hath sanctified in that sort, to all those that in holy and reverent manner have to do with them, as is manifest here. As it was with Naaman, the Syrian, 2 Kings v., who for a time contemned that which God purposed him health by, because he fixed his eyes upon the baseness and commonness of the means, the water of Jordan, ver. 10–12, so do men these holy and spiritual things, because they look but unto the outward things. To this purpose is that where Paul sheweth that neither Jews nor Gentiles regarded the preaching of the word, for that they thus looked upon the outward things: 1 Cor. i. 22, 23, 'The Jews require a sign, and the Grecians seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews even a stumbling block, and unto the Grecians foolishness.' As if he had said, the Jews look for strange, great, worldly works to be wrought by the Messiah at his coming. They dreamed all of an earthly monarchy, and a worldly estate, such as Solomon's was, which, because they saw not in Christ's person, they would none of. The Gentiles, and specially the Grecians, noted for learning, and the philosophers, busied in the studies of human wisdom, they look for deep matters and profound principles of philosophy; and finding the Scripture written plainly, *ad vulgi captum*, 'not in words of human wisdom,' 1 Cor. ii., for this cause they contemn it as too base a subject for them to busy their brains, and take up their time with; and this made him, in the 21st verse, to call it 'foolishness of preaching,' not *ex animo*, but *ex eorum opinione;* thus much he intimateth: 1 Tim. iv. 12, 'Let no man despise thy youth, but be an example in word, in conversation,' &c., intimating that, without better carriage of himself, his young years would be an occasion to hinder the profit of his ministry; men would be apt to contemn the ministry for some infirmity in the means. This is intimated in as if the means and instrument were more glorious and admirable, good would be effected, Luke xvi. 30, and for the baseness of the instrument they contemn holy things. This is that which the apostle saith that men 'eat and drink unworthily,' 1 Cor. xi. 29, because they put not a difference betwixt this spiritual food, 1 Cor. x., and that corporal food, because they judge not aright of these holy mysteries.

*Reason.* Because men live by sense and sight, not by faith, they are not able to discern of things that are hidden, but esteem of things as they see or feel them; they, wanting faith, cannot pierce within the veil, and draw, as it were, the curtain to see the excellency of spiritual mysteries in earthen and base vessels, which makes them grow in contempt and neglect, which the apostle shews, 1 Cor. i. 24; for if faith makes that man conceive and understand them, and receive proof by them, it is manifest that the other is caused by want of faith.

*Use* 1. This may teach us why in, and under the simplicity of the gospel, there is not so much devotion to holy things and the service of God as among idolaters; there is a madding and unreasonable superstition to their idolatrous service, for there is good

reason for it, because under the gospel all outward things are plain, without pomp and glorious shows to the eye, only plain and simple; whereas, in idolatrous service, all things are made glittering and glorious for the outward show, by which the nature of man is marvellously catched and kept, as fishes with baits. It is wondered of many, why idolaters should brag so truly of a multitude as they do, and so many follow after them, when the gospel enjoys nothing so many. The reason is, because here all things are plain and simple, as was said of Christ, Isa. liii. There was 'no beauty in them' for outward things, to make the flesh desire them, therefore they easily and soon contemn them. As God dealt wisely with the church in her infancy, seeing her infirmities, so have they dealt cunningly with his people: he to hold them to himself, they to draw them from the gospel. Because, saith Chrysostom, the people of Israel, who were brought up in Egypt, and had polluted themselves with idolatry, would have sacrifices and ceremonies, so that if they were not permitted unto them they were ready again to fall to idolatry; though God desired a people to worship him in spirit and truth, yet he granted them unto them, dealing as a wise physician, who having a patient sick of a fever, by reason of heat desiring earnestly cold water, and unless it be given him he is ready to seek a halter to strangle himself, or some ways to destroy himself; there the physician, compelled by necessity, gives him a cup of water prepared by himself, and commands him to drink, but forbids him to drink of any other but that; so God gives the Jews goodly ceremonies, but so as it was not lawful for them to use any other. And then were they grieved, saith he, when he shewed his wrath upon them, for making a calf of their earrings, &c. So in cunning and mischievous policy hath the church of Rome, when they saw how the nature of man was affected with holy things, because of the outward means, when simple and base, because the gospel is such they little regarded them; but glorious things were those that affected them, therefore have they fallen from the simplicity of the gospel to that whorish and Babylonish pride they are now in; when it was with her, as Boniface the bishop and martyr said to one that asked whether it was lawful to administer the sacrament in wooden cups, he answered, In times past they had golden priests and wooden chalices; then would they brag of nothing such a multitude as now, when they have wooden priests and golden chalices, since Pope Urban hath made all the ministering attire golden and gay. And so, because they are led by their senses, therefore they are violently carried after this superstition.

*Use* 2. This teacheth us why, in the church, the means of God's worship, his word and table, are so little esteemed or regarded, because men are so led by their senses; and when the means are base and simple, they think so of the worship itself, as Jerome said, *putabant altari deesse religionis sanctimoniam, quia deerat ædificationis ambitio*, they thought the altar was not to be so religiously regarded, because it was not richly bedecked and adorned. Such are they as give no respect to the word, because the minister is of no great respect, but a mean, plain man, who have not learned more to esteem the earthen vessels for the treasure, but less to account of the treasure for the earthen vessels. Hence many set light by the holy table, because they see nothing here but bare bread and wine, very base and mean elements, such as they use ordinarily to feed on elsewhere; and so, as a fool or a natural, if he light on an obligation or a deed, he maketh no more reckoning of it than of a piece of parchment and a little wax, because he understandeth not the contents and end of it; so in these things, not considering the end and use of them, by whom they were appointed. As there are some who overvalue these mysteries, specially the sacraments, that tie the grace of God inseparably to them, and make the *opus operatum* a matter of sufficient virtue, that ascribe some divine power to the very outward elements, and so bring a divine adoration of them, that of holy mysteries make magical miracles, as the church of Rome doth; so, again, are there many in the church of England that undervalue them, that make no other reckoning of them than as of ordinary elements, and repair unto them as to the bodily food, because they are in nature and substance the same: the doctrine here being the ground of it, they being so dull-sighted they can look no further than that which is object to the sense of them, they can see no end nor use of them more, no secret grace nor virtue in them, and, that which is worse, will not submit themselves to be taught, or if taught, not believe, when *oportet discentem credere*.

*Use* 3. To teach every one in these actions *sursum corda habere*, and to lift the eyes of his mind upwards, as with his bodily eyes he seeth the outward elements here, so with the eye of faith to apprehend the matter of it, that which these outward things represent to the mind. The word of God for letters and syllables is but the same with other human writings, but it hath another manner of work with it, in regard of the Spirit and grace of God accompanying it, unto those that hear it with a sanctified ear. As we see that ordinary water and *aqua vitæ* in a phial or glass look both alike, but they differ much in work and effect, because there is a kind of spirit in the one which is not in the other; so the word and the sacrament, though the same in substance with ordinary bread and wine, yet they have a far diverse work and effect with them unto those who receive them with a holy heart and a faithful, in regard of God's covenant (whose seals they are); in regard of the mercy of God, of which they more assure us; in regard of Christ's death, that they represent unto us, and put us in mind of; and in regard of the grace of God's Spirit, that accompanieth them in those

that so receive them for the effecting of these former matters.

Ver. 8. *And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is not evil: and if ye offer the lame and sick, it is not evil: offer it now unto thy prince; will he be content with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.*

*And if you offer the blind for sacrifice.* The Lord proceedeth to prove that they despise him and his table, shewing how they have erred both against his law, and the rule of honesty and comeliness, Lev. xxii. 21, 22.

*And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, it is not evil.* These words are read of some by way of interrogation, 'When ye offer the blind, is it not evil?' Now a negative interrogation ever affirmeth strongly; *q. d.* it is very evil, and yet ye do it. Jerome, Junius, others, read these words by way of affirmation, God continuing to tax their thoughts. You think it not evil, you think it is good enough for God, you make it no fault; and this is the common reading, which is more agreeable to the context; but the matter is not great how we take it, both tend to one end and one effect, both a disliking and disallowing of such sacrifice.

For the sacrifice here spoken of, some understand it only of the sacrifice the priests offered for themselves, Lev. iv. 3, Heb. v. 3. Others for the sacrifice the people brought, which, when they were burnt-offerings, which were all consumed upon the altar, the priests nothing regarded; but the sin-offering to be eaten by the priests, for those they were marvellous careful they might be of the best; and some expound them of the people's offerings in general, whether they were burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, or peace-offerings, or whatsoever. And those words, 'it is not evil,' some take for the people's words, it is good enough for the priests; or it is good enough to be burnt to ashes; others make the priest heartening the people in that practice, which is very probable, God before directing his speech to the priests. In sum, it is like to both, as both are here accused.

The prophet had told them of their base thought of God's table. To this they might haply reply or object; You take too much upon you to see into our hearts, and to censure our thoughts. To this the prophet makes by insinuation an answer, though closely, that he need not to dive so deep; their life and practice taught as much. A man might read the profaneness of their hearts in the uncleanness of their gifts, and their contempt of God in their carriage. The thoughts of men are known either immediately and directly by God alone, Jer. xvii. 10, Mat. ix. 4, or mediately and indirectly; and so man may know them, either as God revealeth them, Ezek. xiv. 1–3, or as men discover them by their actions, looks, or speeches. First, Mat. vii. 16, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' Secondly, Isa. iii. 9, 'The show of their countenance doth witness against them.' Thirdly, Luke vi. 45. In this place the first is understood.

Now, this people are not reproved for bringing no sacrifice, but faulty sacrifice, faulty for quality, contrary to the law, Lev. xxii. 21, 22. Now, what is spoken of their sacrifice may be spiritually applied to ours, that we may make some benefit out of this. The sacrifices of the church in the New Testament are:

*First*, Men themselves, and that first in life, souls and bodies consecrated unto God's service, both in their general callings and their particular places. Rom. xii. 1, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice,' not to slaughter them, but the corruption of them, Rom. vi. 6, 13. Now the mortifying of the affection killeth not the man, Ps. li. 17; as the ram, not Isaac, was slain, though he was offered. Read Gen. xxii., Mark xii. 33, 1 Sam. xv. 22. Secondly, in death; in offering their souls to God's hand, Luke xxiii. 46, Acts vii. 59; and their bodies for testimony of the truth, being called to it, Philip. ii. 17, 2 Tim. iv. 6.

*Secondly*, The sacrifices of the New Testament are something from themselves immediately to God, as praises and prayers, compared to sacrifice, Ps. l. 14, 15; drink-offerings, Ps. cxvi. 31; incense, Ps. cxli. 2, Hosea xiv. 3, Rev. v. 8, and viii. 3, 4. Secondly, to man for God, as alms, Heb. xiii. 16, Ps. iv. 18, Mat. xii. 7.

Now, as their sacrifices signified ours, so their imperfection noteth out ours. The first is blindness, which in the Scripture signifieth ignorance, as Rev. iii. 2, 1 Pet. v. 9, shewing that he detested such service as was done of ignorance without knowledge. By lame, he may mean when things are done without mind and heart, with the outward man, not inward; for fashion, fear, praise, &c. By sick, when it is without spirit and affection; the spirit is gone when it is without zeal, fervency, affection.

*Offer it now unto thy prince.* The second reason, they have offended against nature and civility. He that offereth the Lord of hosts such things as he would not offer unto a man, which the prince will not accept, saith that the table of the Lord is not to be regarded, ye offer such, &c.

*Offer now unto thy prince, captain, or ruler.* There was then no king in Israel, for the kingly dignity was extinct in Jechoniah, Jer. xxii., but they only had captains over them, appointed by the Persian king, to whom they were in bondage. As Zerubbabel is called the captain of Israel, Haggai i. 1, and so it is made more offensive, that they used God as they would not do a mean man, not a king, but a captain; and it is as if God had said, Now make trial of the good will of your captain towards you, which is more familiar to you, being a man and inferior to a king, whom, if thou labourest thus to reconcile unto thyself, thou shalt more offend and excite against thee. What an indignity is this then against me, that I should be no more, or not so much accounted of as a mean captain!

How should not this, instead of reconciling me, more displease and provoke me! And what can you look for from me, so mighty a God, to defend and vindicate my glory and service from such indignities, but wrath and displeasure? 'Will he be content with thee, or will it displease him?' as if he said, undoubtedly, it will marvellously displease him.

*Or accept thy person*, or *accept thy face?* That is, will he kindly and lovingly look upon thee, and grant thee the things thou desirest? as Gen. xix. 21, Job xlii. 8, 9. So here, will he friendly respect you, and grant your request? No; he will be more offended with you.

In the whole, he answereth, that they might object, that he took too much upon him to pry into their thoughts and hearts, when he did no otherwise than ordinarily he might do, judge their lives by their practices. The point then is:

*Doct.* The wickedness of the life proclaimeth and preacheth to men the profaneness of the heart, as Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They have corrupted and done an abominable work, there is none that doeth good.' Was not this enough to convince them of impiety and atheism before God which searcheth the heart? So there is another way for man to know: Titus i. 16, 'They profess that they know God; but by works they deny him, and are abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.' And this is enough to condemn them of impiety and profaneness, of contempt of God, want of the fear of God, before man that seeth the outward man only, and must by it judge of the inward. Mat. vii. 16–18, 'Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? So every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; and a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' A good or evil tree is known, not by the leaves or flowers, but by the fruits:* 1 John iii. 10, 'In this are the children of God known, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.'

*Reason* 1. Because the tongue will bewray the irreligiousness of the heart when it speaketh folly, as James i. 26, 'If any man among you seem religious, and refraineth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.' And Mat. xii. 34, 'O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things, when ye are evil? for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' Hence is that Mat. xxvi. 73, 'So after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said unto Peter, Surely thou art also one of them; for even thy speech bewrayeth thee.' Though the tongue may now and then prove a false glass, yet it is then, when it maketh show, not of the worse but of the better, as false glasses do commonly make men seem fairer than they are, and not fouler.

*Reason* 2. Because the nature of man is so hypocritical, and willing to be accounted good, that if anything be in the heart that good is it will shew itself; nay, though nothing be in it, yet it will dissemble, at least for time and place. So when there nothing appears but evil, and the whole course is naught, it must follow that the heart must needs be stark naught. Many apples rotten at the heart are whole skinned, but if rotten in the outside they have the taint of the heart.

*Use* 1. This controlleth such rash censurers, as will go further than God's prophet, as will judge of men, not by their lives and their actions, but by their own fancies and conceits, contrary to their actions. If the prophet, a man of that wisdom and revelations, did content himself with their actions, and join issue with them upon their outward carriage, shall these men, who have no such thing, nor any extraordinary gifts to discern spirits, sit upon men's souls, and judge their secrets, and condemn them for hypocrites, and contemn them for deep dissemblers, though they can find nothing in their lives that may argue their hypocrisy and hollowness?

*Obj.* But do such wise men of the world these things without ground?

*Ans.* It cannot be, neither is; but they are deceitful grounds. The first is, the strict course of life that the parties take they thus judge; a marvellous thing! different spirits! The prophet condemns men for their dissolute lives, these for the straitness of their lives. Thus if any man do make conscience of sin, he is by them noted as a pharisee, that is, an hypocrite. That as he said, *Non potest esse salvus, qui non vult esse malus; salvus saltem à linguis maledicis;* so it is, 1 Peter iv. 4, 'It seemeth unto them strange that ye run not with them unto the same excess of riot, therefore speak they evil of you.' But as St Bernard said that Balaam, when he thought to have cursed God's people for hire, did bless them again and again, though against his will, so these men more commend than discommend these persons, where they seek so to disgrace them, while unwillingly they heap praises as reproaches upon them; and while they go about to backbite them, against their wills they acquit, because they object good things instead of evil against them, as if they could find no matter of evil in them.

*Obj.* But, Mat. xxiii. 23, Christ condemns the scribes for strictness in paying tithes.

*Ans.* But the latter part answers the former, and it sheweth they are hypocrites not for doing the less, but omitting the greater; as the other side, that they are hypocrites who do the greater and omit the less. If they cannot justly challenge them for omitting the greater, they cannot make them hypocrites; nay, haply these that are censured may justly, by Christ's rule, judge their censurers as hypocrites, because they

* Non ex foliis, non ex floribus, sed ex fructu arbor bona malávé dignoscitur.—*Bern. Epist.* 107.

omit the less, and are altogether negligent in them. For undoubtedly the heart can be sound in neither, that is not in both, Luke xvi. 10. 'He that is faithful in the least, he is also faithful in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.' It is a sure token of an hypocrite, for a man to live apparently in the practice of any one known sin, though in other things he seem never so strict; for, Eccles. x. 1, 2, 'any one dead fly corrupts the ointment.' But to condemn a man for an hypocrite, in being stricter than ourselves in some cases, and for being nice in matters of small moment, when the whole tenor of his life is otherwise righteous also, it is to condemn him for that which Christ will commend him for at last, when no man shall take his praise or his joy from him, Mat. xxv. 21. But these men thus condemn themselves, for as the heathen, *ut quisque optimus est, ita quemque optimum esse putat;* so, *ut quisque pessimus, &c*, as Heliogabalus thought every man dishonest in heart, because he was so himself. So these men think that men cannot without hypocrisy either be nice in small things, or very careful and zealous in greater things, because themselves are not come to that sincerity, to make conscience of them themselves, and therefore if they should seem to do it, they should but dissemble; and they measure other men's consciences by their own. In a word, thus to judge is a most corrupt course; as if a man must needs have it, that the tree is rotten at the root, because the fruit of it seemed to be good, or at least because the fruit of it shewed better and fairer than the fruit of many other trees that grew near it. Then, as Mat. vii. 1, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' Else if thou thus judge God's servants, take heed of a censure from him, and, it may be, from those whom thou thus censurest, because, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 'the saints shall judge the world.'

The second ground of these men's judging is some strange judgment that befalls them that seem thus religious and careful. For if one that hath made conscience of his ways be overtaken with any judgment, an unusual cross, or die suddenly, then judge they of him, as Job's friends did of him, that God hath found out his hypocrisy. What would they do if he had died in that misery? And yet might he have done well enough for all that, and did trust in God: Job xiii. 15, 'Lo, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, and I will approve my ways in his sight.' Thus the barbarians judged of St Paul, Acts xxviii. 4; and so the disciples, John ix. 2. But as men shall not be judged before God for that they have suffered, but done, so men shall not be judged of men; for so Christ shewed by crossing his disciples' judgment, John ix. 3, as also theirs, Luke xiii. 3, 5; as he sheweth not only by this which might come from the malice of Pilate, but from that of the eighteen who perished under the tower of Siloam, for the like may befall to another and themselves.

*Obj.* But may not a man judge at all by God's judgment?

*Ans.* Yes, in these and the like cases. If God have foretold such a thing, Num. xvi. 29, 30, when it comes we may judge; or if the judgment befall him that hath been, and so continues, a notorious wicked man, as in Athens, when a beam of the house fell in a banquet, and knocked a professed atheist alone on the head, there is then some ground for our censure, for then the word and work of God meet together; else there can be no certain judgment; because, as it is, Eccles. ix. 1, 2, 'I have surely given mine heart to all this, and to declare all this, that the just, and the wise, and their works, are in the hands of God: and no man knoweth either love or hatred of all that is before them. All things come alike to all: and the same condition is to the just, and to the wicked; to the good, and to the pure, and to the polluted; and to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.' And that which is befallen another may befall thee; for it is no faith, but a fancy, whereby any man thinketh himself excepted from any outward calamity, having no promise for freedom. Therefore should no man judge another that liveth outwardly well, by aught that befalleth him, for it may befall him, and that in God's justice, as Prov. xxiv. 17, 18.

*Use* 2. This tells how it is warrantable to judge and censure of other men, such as are wicked and profane, and yet cry out that any man should sit on them but themselves, and of those we mean who boast of as good and sincere a heart to God as the best, though their lives be not so religious as theirs; yea, when they are profane and notoriously wicked, yet men must judge charitably of them, because they cannot see into their thoughts, and know what there is there. But we answer them, that their lives tell us what lies hid; nay, that which is within cannot be hid, because their lives are such. For, Mat. vii. 18, a man need not dig into the ground to see what the root is, the fruit will easily discover the tree; so is it with the heart and actions; by good actions we may be deceived, because of the disposition of the party, Mat. vi. Alms and prayers by vain glory, or want of sincerity, are not good at all to the doer; but evil cannot be good by good intention, for that which is evil in itself cannot be made good to any for any end. And so evil actions still argue an evil heart, as bad fruits an evil tree; and so it is a very ridiculous thing for men to brag of a sound and good heart, when their lives be as they be. For, James iii. 11, evil words, saith the apostle, corrupt good manners, their own and others, much more evil works good men; yea, they argue the doer corrupt within, for it is not the fruit makes the tree bad, but it is the badness of the tree that maketh the bad fruit; the fruit discovereth the naughtiness of the tree. For as the adder hath a sting before he

stingeth, so are men wicked before they work wickedness; then is it known she hath a sting, and they corruption; for as the mouth speaketh from the abundance of the heart, so the heart worketh from the abundance of the soul; so that lawful for me to judge a common swearer, a known adulterer, a manifest deceiver, an usual drunkard, &c., to have a corrupt heart; for when the earth is broken up, and a filthy stench cometh out, argues it not that there was some dead corpse there? So when men send out cursings, blasphemies, swearings, railings, and such like, that a man should not be able to endure, from whence issue these, but from a dead and rotten soul? These carry about them then the grave and sepulchre of the soul. Now, that which is said of the words may be applied to the works. As a man therefore coming to a tomb, though never so costly, and curiously, or so royally decked, yet if at some vent he apprehend a filthy savour issuing out of it, he knoweth well there is not only a dead but a rotten carcase within; so when a man feeleth a filthy and unwholesome scent, either of profane speech, or of dissolute life, issuing from the heart, which is the fountain of both, he must needs conclude, neither is it against charity to censure it, that there is a soul not only dead and buried, but even rotten in sin and corruption. Therefore, let no man delude himself while he would deceive others, to bear men in hand that he is sound at heart, when he is unsound and corrupt in his life, as if a man might be persuaded that it is a vine or fig-tree which he seeth hanging full of crabs and wildings. Nay, it must needs be otherwise; therefore, as Christ said, Mat. xii. 33, 'Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree evil, and his fruit evil: for the tree is known by his fruit.' If thou hate sin, shew it in thy life; if thou fear God, shew it by thy careful walking in his ways, and seeking to please him; if thou lovest the word, frequent the assembly with diligence and devotion, and not carelessly and slippily; if thou think reverently of the service of God, be careful reverently to address thyself to the performance of it. Otherwise know, thy practice proclaims the want of these things; and think not much if others judge thee by that, for they have their warrant from Christ their king: 'By their fruits you shall know them.'

*If ye offer the blind.* The Lord he requires not all the substance of a man to his service, but a few things, and those not very costly, yet he requires the choice and best in their kind, and they be accounted of better than any others; the best should not be dear to them, nor too dear for him.

*Doct.* Men ought to offer their best things to God, and to think nothing too dear for him, either to give to him or for him, Gen. xxii. 2, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

*Use* 1. This serves to reprove all hypocrites, such as the world and the church is full of, who offer not the best, but the worst unto God, and think those things good enough, having many things too dear for him, whenas nothing is too good for their back and bellies, for their pleasures and delights, to serve the flesh and world withal. But generals touch not; for particulars. First, the maintenance of the ministers is the Lord's portion, as not to seek it far off, Mal. iii. 8, for if the spoiling of them be the spoiling of him, then *è contra.* But how many have we that think everything is too much that they have, and any thing is good enough for them! I say nothing of them who bestow all on pleasures, and give nothing to the Lord's portion, who, as they think playing better than preaching, bestow much on players, but nothing on preachers. But I aim at such as account of preaching, and enjoy the benefit of the ministry, and yet a vain man will bestow more on a player in a year, than they in many on a preacher. Alms to the poor is a gift to God, as the Scripture teacheth; but how many have we, I do not say rich churls like him in the Gospel, that will not give crumbs to Lazarus, but, that will give something, but it is alms of mouldy bread, tainted meat, that scarce dogs will eat, or cannot be spent otherwise; whose rust of their silver, and their moth-eaten garments shall be a witness against them, and eat their flesh. Anything is too much for these, nothing too good for their bellies, pleasures, or pleasant companions who delight them, James v. 2, 3. Wretched men had rather give to parasites and flatterers, than to Christ, from whom they have so many benefits.* These shall have of the best, those of the worst; these liberally, those sparingly. If I should tell you that a citizen in the end of the sickness being some few miles from the city, when the plague was beginning hotly, going thither but of pleasure, at his meat would have given a crown for a set of musicians to delight himself withal, when motion was made in the company to give somewhat to the relief of the sick and poor in that town, as men who could not forget the miseries of the poor, from the experience of their own, he among the rest gave but a penny or twopence at the most. I say, if I should tell you of such an one (I say not I know the party and the thing), I know you would all condemn him in your thoughts. But this I say, I know many who will not stick to spend a crown, ten, twenty, thirty, forty shillings, upon one idle journey for their pleasure and delight (which I do not simply condemn), whenas it will grieve them, and they cannot smother it, to bestow in a whole year upon the Lord's Levites and his poor Lazarites, a crown or ten shillings, or the like portion, far inferior to their ability; how are these not reproved here? And if these, then those who give to the Lord, not the flower and youth of their age, but to the flesh and devil, and the dregs of their age to God; their strength and health to the world, their weakness and sickness to God. The first fruits are too good for God, though he call for them; the gleanings are good enough. Many have children, some are

* Miseri homines parasitis et assentatoribus distribuere malunt, quam Christo qui tot sibi beneficia contulerit.

of good parts, good gifts and towardliness; it is pity they should serve the Lord, and be for his ministry, they are fit to stand before kings and in great places, Dan. i. 3–5; but if any be of no gifts, he is fit for no other use, turn him to the ministry, 1 Kings xii. 31, 2 Chron. xiii. 9, and this must be his refuge against poverty. Many betake themselves to the reading of the word, and come to the church when they have nothing else to do, neither their bellies to feed, nor their backs to deck, nor the world to follow, the weather not for them to walk in the fields, as Luke ix. 59, 61. Many will offer small and petty sins to God, that they have no pleasure or profit by, but retain their main sins which give delight, 2 Kings x. 28, 29; Mark vi. 17, 18, 20; Mat. xxiii. 23; yea, many can be content to part with their outward goods, not inward corruption, but buy out their sins with alms, Micah vi. 6, 7. Now a number of such hypocrites as these are manifestly here reproved, that they think things too dear for the Lord, and please themselves, when they offer of the worst unto him.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to honour God with the best he hath, to think nothing too good for him, and to labour that nothing be dear to him in comparison of him, if he call for it. To take Solomon's advice: Prov. iii. 9, 'Honour the Lord with thy riches, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.' Defraud not his Levites of their portion, thinking it too much that is bestowed on them; for, 1 Cor. ix. 11, 'if we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?' and Gal. vi. 6, 'Let him that is taught in the word, make him that hath taught him partaker in all his goods.' And if men be straitened this wise, it may be just with God to take their ministers from them. Unless the people bring oil, the light will go out in the temple;* so in ordinary course and God's judgment. Feed the poor with the best, and deal liberally with them, Deut. xiv. 29, Neh. viii. 10. Make them heirs and co-heirs with thy children and kindred (as Chrysostom), when thou art dying and going, though it is far better thou shouldst nourish them living, and before thou depart, *Hom.* 25, *ad pop Ant.* Remember God in the best of thy days, health, youth, strength, Eccles. xii. 1, Deut. vi. 5. If thou hast children, think none too good for God, to carry God's name, to stand in God's stead, 1 Cor. ii. 16, and v. 20. And if God will have him, if he be as Isaac, freely offer him; the better, the more acceptable to himself. Give God the time that is meet, and he requireth, though it be precious to thee, and may be employed to profit otherwise, Exod. xxxiv. 21. Offer to God the greatest and sweetest sins, nearest and dearest, Mat. v. 29, 30, as Heb. xi. 17; yea, give God the heart, and honour him with outward holiness, Prov. xxiii. 26. In all things be an Abel, not a Cain, Gen. iv.

* Nisi dederit oleum populus, extinguetur lucerna in templo.—*Orig.*

*The blind.* Sacrifices were types both of head and body; and for body, of the persons and service. And thus God rejecting their sacrifices for their blindness, shews how he condemns blindness in those who serve him. And blindness is ignorance, and want of knowledge, Rev. iii., 2 Peter i. 5, 9. And so from hence observe.

*Doct.* Nothing that is done in obedience of God can be good, or a good work, unless it be of knowledge, zeal, charity, devotion; good intention cannot make it good, if knowledge be wanting, for it is a blind offering. The knowledge we speak of is a general knowledge of the will and word of God, and special knowledge of the lawfulness and goodness of that action, 2 Peter i. 5, 9; Deut. v. 27; Mat. xxviii. 19, 20; Rom. x. 2, 3, xiv. 23.

*Reason* 1. Because the Lord respects not the outward show and pomp of works (as the multitude and greatness of them), but considers them inwardly, whether they flow from true obedience or no. Now, true obedience is then, when we believe by the word of God, that both he requires such works, and they are those which please him. Now this cannot be without some measure of knowledge.

*Reason* 2. Because, as he condemns the vain pomp and outward show of hypocrites, so does he all feigned service and will-worship, Col. ii. 23. Now then it is will-worship, not only when things not commanded are done, and men think by them to do God good service; but when things commanded are done, and they know not the command, but for some other respects do them, for as good no commandment, in respect of them, as they not know it. And if things done, which he had commanded, be rejected, as will-worship, Isa. i. 12, because they were not done in that manner he had commanded, though they knew his will, more this; for as they in Isaiah did their works, not in conscience to God, but for some other end, so these cannot, because they know it not, and so it cannot be acceptable. He that doeth a man a good turn, and meant it not, but aimed at himself, profit or glory, or whatsoever, cannot look for any great thanks from him, for whom it fell out so well.

*Use* 1. This confuteth papists, as touching ignorance, which they much advance and command. Though they be ashamed of the old position, that ignorance is the mother of devotion, yet they accuse knowledge for want of devotion; they practise to keep the people in ignorance, and defend it still to be good. For when we urge the necessity of knowledge for all our actions, and that whether from the word, fathers, or reason, they oppose themselves against all, besides their manifold reasons, for which they have beaten their brains, to prove the people ought not to have the Scriptures in a known tongue, and so not knowledge. When we object unto them, John v. 39, 'Search the Scriptures,' and justly complain of their spirit contrary to Christ's, Dureus denies that this is spoken

to all Christians; for how should (saith he) the ignorant and unlearned search them? We answer, that if Christ had then spoken to the learned only, his exception had been good; but if he preached to the whole people, as then he did, if to all the Jews, why not to all Christians? Let them shew a difference; but if none, but that both Jews and Christians must, by them, have the knowledge of Christ and eternal life, when these are common to all in the church, why not the other? When we urge that, Acts xvii. 11, 'The Bereans searched the Scriptures whether those things were so,' Bellarmine answereth, That was because they doubted whether he was an apostle or no. The matter is not why they examined, but that they did, and are commended for it by the Holy Ghost, that they compared his doctrine with the doctrine of the prophets. Then ought all Christians thus to do, to try the spirits, for now may doubt be made, more than at that time, 1 John iv. 1, and no search can be but by the Scriptures, and knowledge of them. When we urge that Col. iii. 16, then they exempt the ignorant, and say it is not for all, but commend unto us the decree of the council of Trent, who have allowed such to read as have license from their ordinary, upon testimony from their curates that they are humble and devout persons (*Rhemist, præfat.*), that is, none but their pope-holy, devout Catholics; and yet the apostle speaks generally; and if the people be rude, and, as they still object, ignorant, we answer, that is no reason, or of no force to prove they must be kept from the Scriptures. This is the way to make them still rude; this ought not to be so, and that which is a fault in them, can be no argument against this, as if a man should be denied the benefit, not of light, but of salve, because his eyes are sore. When we object unto them the fathers, as Chrysostom, upon the place of the Colossians, and divers other places, or that of him, Hom. 2, in Mat. *et aliis:* Hear I pray you, O ye laity, buy your Bibles, the medicines of your souls, if you will buy you nothing else; get the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles. To this the Rhemists, *præfat. sect.* 14, answer, that he speaks this as a pulpit-man, not as giving rules in the schools. As if he would speak one thing in the pulpit, another thing out of it, or make the pulpit a place to utter lies. These who thus censure the fathers, no marvel though they often be saucy with Luther and Calvin. But Bellarmine answereth, *de verbo Dei*, lib. ii. cap. xvi., that he spoke that then, because many men were given to be at theatres and stage plays, and other vanities, and never read the Scriptures, no, not such as had understanding; and he exhorteth all, not that he would have all to read them, but that they should do it, which could do it with profit; for he knew he had to deal with those who need such amplification. Mark that Chrysostom is made an orator, no preacher, one that, for advantage, would speak more than he thought. When upon Col. iii. 16, he exhorts not only in general terms, but specially, Hear, O you worldly men, that have wives and children, he commands you to read the Scripture, and not lightly and slightly, but diligently and painfully. How can they restrain those with any conscience to some, which is spoken generally to all? And for this reason, holds it not now? Have we not plays, they and we, theatres fuller than churches, to the corrupting of the minds and manners of our people? Find we not many, of good capacity, more affected with anything than the Scriptures? Then, as necessary it is they should be exhorted, and read them; and yet, with them, many a man read anything but Scriptures: by all which, as they themselves make gain of them, so they make them and their sacrifices, service and obedience, whatsoever it is, unacceptable unto God, because they are blind sacrifices, specially that, when they teach them to pray in an unknown tongue, where every word must needs be a blind service.

*Use* 2. To reprove all such as keep themselves in ignorance and without knowledge. Being blind, they will be blind still; they need not that any law forbid them the reading of the Scriptures, they can be a law unto themselves. And whatsoever others can object, that they have against themselves, of the difficulty, the hardness, the obscurity and danger of reading them: or if not that, yet that they must learn from their ministers, that which Duræus, the Jesuit, said impiously, that Christ left pastors to the people, not Bibles, they so practise; for they will not once almost look in them, only they will hear from the ministers, and would to God they would hear constantly and carefully. They might have more knowledge; but while they only hear, they remain still ignorant, and hearing so carelessly, by ignorance they do the things that God hath commanded now and then, but without all true knowledge, and so make them unacceptable to God, when they work by imitation, and often inquire of the lawfulness after the deed.

*Use* 3. To persuade every man, that hath any desire that his service may be acceptable to God, whatsoever it be, to labour for knowledge, that it may be a seeing sacrifice; for that which the apostle hath, Heb. xi. 6, is here more; if not without faith, then not without knowledge. Now, what servant or child is it that obeys and doth service to his father or master, and knows it is not acceptable, and yet, if he be told what way he may take to have it accepted, will not? So in this, if there be any desire to please him, labour not so much to do, as how to do, or to know what you do; and this not only by siting at Gamaliel's feet, and hearing the ministers, but by reading the Scriptures and word of God yourselves diligently and painfully; for the apostle so persuades, Col. iii. 16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you plenteously in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with a

grace in your hearts to the Lord ;' not, as Chrysostom well saith, that the word should be in you, that is, come as a stranger, and stay for a night, a season, and gone again ; but it must dwell in you, and that not sparingly, but copiously and abundantly. Chrysostom's exhortation is not so necessary for these times and this audience, to get them Bibles, for they must have them in their hands and houses ; but to use their Bibles, which most neglect. Therefore, as he, *de Lazaro, Hom.* 3, I again and again exhort you, not only here, to attend to the things that are spoken, but when you are at home, to read the Scriptures carefully, which I use to press upon them that are about me.* If this may prevail a little, more may that of Moses, Deut. vi. 6–8, and that of Christ, John v. 39, and the former of St Paul. But, alas ! how may that complaint of Chrysostom be applied, *Hom.* 13 *in Joan*, Who is it that, when he comes home, doth anything worthy of a Christian? Who is it that seeks the meaning of the Scripture ? None at all. We may ordinarily find you at tables or dice, but very seldom at your Bibles.† Doth not he describe many of our Christians, and their families ? and so that, being without knowledge, all they do is unacceptable. Let us labour then for this knowledge, and be not idols in the church, who have eyes and see not. And so much knowledge is required as there is capableness and means.

*And if ye offer the lame.* Lame sacrifices forbidden signified the dislike that God had of such service as was done by halves, in body, and not in mind ; *è contra*, in hypocrisy, for fashion and custom, and such like.

*Doct.* Lame service which is done to God, is unacceptable unto him, whether it be done with the body without the heart, or pretended to be done with the heart, when the body goes another way ; when it is hypocritical and dissembling, or by parting or sharing with God, it is abominable, and not acceptable unto him, therefore rejected he the lame sacrifices. The ceremony leads to this substance, the shadow to this body : 1 Kings xviii. 21, 'And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions ? If the Lord be God, follow him : but if Baal be he, then go after him. And the people answered him not a word.' This God complained of, Isa. xxix. 13, Jer. xii. 2, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, Acts iv. 36, with v. 1, 2, Mat. vi. 2, 5.

*Reason* 1. Because all and the whole is his, both body and soul, by his threefold right of creation, redemption, and preservation or gubernation ; therefore he will have all, or nothing can be accepted of him.

* Semper hortor, et hortari non desinam, ut non hic tantum attendatis iis quæ dicuntur, verum etiam cum domi fueritis, assiduè divinarum scripturarum lectioni vacetis. Quod quidem et iis qui privatim mecum ingressi sunt non desisto inculcare.—*Chrysost.*

† Quis nostrum, quæso, repetit domi aliquid, aut Christiano dignum opus aggreditur? Quis Scripturarum sensus perscrutatur ? Nemo sane : sed alveolos et talas frequenter invenimus, libros quam rarissimos.—*Chrysost.*

*Reason* 2. Because this is to make a false God of him ; for it is a position full of truth, that a true God, as he will not be worshipped with feigned and counterfeit worship, so not with partial worship, but he will have all, or none ; whereas false gods will be content so they may have but a share. But the true God is like the true mother, 1 Kings iii. 26, will not have it divided.

*Use.* 1. This condemneth all presenting of the body before an idol, or in idols' service, under pretence of keeping the heart to God, whether it be done by fear, fancy, or for profit and gain. This is to offer up a lame sacrifice to God, such as he abhors ; it is without any precedent or precept in the Scriptures ; nay, the commandements, precepts, laws, admonitions, judgments of the law and prophets of the Old and New Testament are all against it, commanding to fly idols and idolatry. The companions of Daniel chose rather to be cast into the fiery furnace than to bow to the king's idol. The mother in the Maccabees, and her children, embraced death rather than they would eat swine's flesh contrary to the law of God. Infinite are the martyrs of all times, who have courageously embraced death before they would do any such thing, who had been all very unwise, and fools, if this would have served, and God would have accepted such lame sacrifice.

*Obj.* But for all this a man may go to mass, and such superstitions, may he not ?

*Ans.* No more to the one than to the other; for this is the greatest idol in the world, and for it more abominable idolaters are the papists than any other ; for never any worshipped the thing itself, as they do the breaden God and the cross, but they worshipped God at it, and in it, as their old distinction hath been.

*Obj.* But we go to make us abhor it, when we see their folly and vanity.

*Ans.* This were as if a man should go into a harlot's house or stews, under pretence to see and to abhor ; whom shall he make believe that this is his end ? If it were apparent, yet what madness were it for a man to lay himself open to be taken with such a danger ? He presumes of his strength, nay, he provokes God to take his strength from him, and to let him fall into it, as in Peter. This is not the way to abhor it. But as he that would abhor uncleanness, or drunkenness, must not take that course, to go to stews or to frequent taverns, for that is to make him more in love with them ; but must labour for a chaste and sober heart, and that will make him abhor it, so here for a religious and holy heart ; for it is not the seeing of evil that makes men abhor it, but the seeing of good. If men labour for true grace, they shall easily abhor sin ; and in this, as in all others, evil must not be done that good may come. Nay, though never so much good would ensue, yet when God hath forbidden it, when he dislikes it, it must be avoided.

*Use* 2. This condemneth all profane men who talk

of serving God with their hearts, howsoever they serve him not with their bodies, and they doubt not but God will accept them. The Lord's day is a day God hath required men to do him public service in; how many spend that day either in journeying for some small affairs, or withdrawing themselves upon some small occasion, and yet tell us they doubt not but God will accept their thoughts and their heart, as they ride, or the like; as if he that dishonours God in his body, could honour him in his heart at one and the same time; or, if he could he would accept it. As if he could serve him within, that rebels against him without; as if a child or servant could think to persuade his father or master, that he respected and served him in his heart, when he disobeyed and dishonoured him in all his outward carriage, and did not that he bade him. Nay, the contrary is most true. So for alms, that it is enough to look upon the poor ruefully, and speak mournfully to them, and seem to have affections within, but their goods they bestow upon harlots and vain persons, their labour and strength upon them; and yet they think God will accept their heart, as if a subject should pretend a loyal heart to his prince, and think to be accepted for it, when he gives his goods and spends his strength in a service against him, serving his enemy.

*Use* 3. Here is condemned all lame service of God, when men will give their bodies, but reserve their hearts from him; they will come before him, and draw near to him with the outward man, hear the word, pray, and offer him praises, and receive the sacraments; but in the mean time their hearts are absent, they are without their soul; for all things are done without understanding, praying and hearing, &c.; they were as good be done in a strange tongue in respect of them; yea, better, for they had the more excuse. Their affections, which are as their hands, either to receive that is offered to them, or to hold up that which they bring to God, are so full of their covetousness and worldliness, of their fears, joys, several pleasures and delights, that they can receive nothing else; but whatsoever is offered them, is as water poured upon a vessel that hath the mouth full stopped, and so all runneth by; or if they receive a little, yet their pleasures or covetousness, or such like, do soon exclude them, or choke them, as thorns do the corn or seed.

*Use* 4. To teach every man to endeavour, and perform, services to God both in body and soul, as in 1 Cor. vi. 20, seeing his right is to one as well as the other; and the giving of him one condemns a man, for not giving of him the other. If God was so angry with Ananias and Sapphira, that he divided them, because they had divided that which they ought to have given whole unto him, how will he accept a man that shall divide himself when he comes to him? 'Their heart is divided, now shall they be found faulty,' Hosea x. 2; we must bring both body and soul to the service of God, to pray with the mouth and to pray with the understanding, to hear with the ear and to speak with the heart, for the body hath both *os* and *aures*, to speak to God, and to hear him. Men must give God the bodily presence when he calleth for it; they must come to his service, but they may not leave their hearts behind them, or suffer them to be carried away when they are present, but leave everything, when they come, behind them, that may hinder them, as Abraham did at the foot of the mount; yea, when they would fall upon his service, as the fowls would upon Abraham's sacrifice, Gen. xv. 2, drive them away, and perform all duties with the whole man, that it may be a whole, and so an acceptable sacrifice, 2 Sam. v. 8.

*And sick.* Sick sacrifices of beasts were condemned, to shew how God dislikes that service that is without spirit and affection, faintly and drowsily performed.

*Doct.* Sick service God dislikes, when things are performed without spirit and affection, when the duties are done without zeal and fervency, without alacrity and cheerfulness. This was the reason why Aaron and his sons would not eat the sin-offering, because they could not do it cheerfully, Lev. x. 19. He would have all things done cheerfully, fervently, zealously, Isaiah lviii. 13; 1 Cor. ix. 17; Rom. xii. 8, 11; 2 Cor. ix. 7; Eccles. xi. 1.

*Reason.* Because when things are done dully and coldly by one, it argues little account of God's person, and small desire of the things he hath; but the contrary is, when they are done fervently and busily, when a man sets his heart to the work, as that Dan. vi. 14; whenas the cold and careless performing of these things, argues no account nor love to God and his service; no marvel then though he dislike it, and contrariwise accept it, being done with fervency.

*Use* 1. This condemneth those who condemn zeal, fervency, and heat in the service of God.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to labour to do all things in the service and fear of God, with zeal, alacrity, and earnestness; not to go about it as sick men do about the works of their callings, faintly and feebly, but earnestly, whether they pray or preach, hear or give alms, whether for a short time or long. It is not enough that the Lord's day be kept, that the word is heard and preached, that the prayers be made, alms given, and such like, unless they have that affection which God requires, and be done with that sense and feeling, that zeal and fervency, which is fitting. The work is common to hypocrites and profane men, with the children of God; the affection is proper to his own: not that the other have not the natural affection, but that they have not the sanctified affection; their affections are about worldly things, pleasant or profitable; these about spiritual things. As the vain men, or worldly men, are tickled, and marvellously affected with the things they go about, so ought men in the service of God. And though haply it is not to be attained unto, to have as fervent affections to the

things of God, as carnal men have to the things of the world, because they are wholly carnal, these but partly sanctified; they have nothing to hinder them, these have great hindrances and pull-backs, even their own corruptions; yet must they endeavour, what they may, to do everything with all cheerfulness, and even grieve to see them go about their sports and profits, their delight and gain, with greater spirits, and more cheerfully, than themselves about these holy things; yea, let it grieve them that they themselves follow worldly things more eagerly and affectionately than spiritual things, and find greater cheerfulness in the one than in the other. And so things done drowsily and heavily, without cheerfulness, sha'l not be accepted.

*Quest.* But what if this affection be wanting; shall a man therefore not do it, or do that which will not be accepted?

*Ans.* Nay, that follows not; for then should God have no service of the best, who find themselves ever unfit, but only of hypocrites and carnal men, who think anything good enough; but though wants this way be, yet must not this be left off, for so we read the children of God have done. Nehemiah, unfit to pray, yet prayed, chap. i. 4; Hannah, 1 Sam. i. Our Saviour Christ himself, when his heart was full of sorrow (though this was in him an infirmity without sin, though not in us, because of the corruption it draws from our vessel, as new wine put into a musty vessel).

*Use* 3. To teach men not to defer the service of God till sickness and old age, when they must needs be without heat and affection.

*Use* 4. To teach every one to whet on one another, and to labour to set an edge on one another, and to stir up their affections, when they are with them, to come to the service of God, specially such as have charge of others, for their charge. As they have any desire that God may have the sacrifice and service that is pleasant unto him, and to keep themselves free from their sins, they should, as Prov. xxvii. 17, 'sharpen,' and Deut. vi. 7, 'whet,' and, in general, Heb. x. 24, 'provoke one another.'

*Offer it now unto thy prince.* The second reason and proof of their offence, because they had gone against civility and common honesty.

*Doct.* This is the corruption of man's nature, that he preferreth man before God; loving, fearing, serving, seeking his honour before God's, Gen. xxvii. 12, 2 Kings v. 18, John xii. 42, 43. 'Nevertheless, even among the chief rulers, many believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be cast out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,' John v. 44. Yea, in all things man is more careful of all duties, and maketh it much more heinous to fail in duty to the one, than to neglect and set light by the other.

*Reason* 1. Because they see and converse with men daily; not so with God. It is the reason why John gave him the lie that would brag of the love of God, when he lived in the hatred of men, 1 John iv. 20.

*Reason* 2. Because love being the ground of all duties to God or man, and affection to man is natural, to God spiritual, that we have of ourselves, this is the gift of God; therefore mere natural men have care of duties to men, more than to God, because they have this love, not the other. And regenerate men too, because after conversion nature helps us with the Spirit to the service of man; but to God the Spirit only works, yet but weakly, men being more flesh than spirit a long time after conversion.

*Reason* 3. Because men have a carnal understanding, because they are able to see what they receive from men, but not from God. Hence no good turn from men goes unrecompensed, at least without thanks, but from God many go without thanks. We have carnal eyes to see what men give us, not spiritual to see what God bestows; to see the instrument, not the author.

*Reason* 4. Because men have perverse and partial judgments; for that which befalleth a man, every one thinks may befall him; but that which toucheth or dishonoureth God, they think it toucheth not their freehold at all.

*Use* 1. To teach every man to see the corruption of his heart, when he findeth that he is in himself and others more careful of the duties that belong to men than to God; where the slaying of the one troubleth him more than the neglect of the other. In himself he is carefully to live civilly and honestly in the world, to give every man his own, &c.; but in meantime he is careless in the duties of God's service. This bewrays the corruption of his nature, for that he may do by the light of nature, and so have heathen men both commanded and done; and as it is mere hypocrisy for a man to be careful in duties unto God, when he is careless in duties unto men, so the contrary is but mere civility. He that is truly religious, is careful of both; he that faileth in the one, is short of many heathen and infidels; and in the other, he that goes no further, is still but a natural and carnal man. They have carnal affections and understandings, and are men of perverse judgments. We shall find that true of them which St Augustine wrote *de mendacio.** Men esteem those sins worst that are most injurious to this life; and again, *Non odimus eos qui nulli molesti sunt*, We do not hate those that live in the practice of sin, be it never so great against God, as long as they are not injurious and offensive to man; from this corruption is it, that men fear man more than God; are more desirous to please him, to keep and recover his favour than God's.

* Nulla homines graviora peccata æstimant, quam quæ huic vitæ faciunt injuriam.—*Aug.*

If a great man be offended with them (as Chrysostom), they will entreat friends, and neighbours, and others, tend patiently many days, entreat humbly once and again, a hundred times, and if he will not be reconciled, they cannot be in quiet; but when they have offended God, they can lie and sleep securely, and take their ease, and follow their pleasures. Shews not this their corruption? From the same corruption is it, that if they receive any benefit from men or by them, they labour to be thankful, and to recompense; but though they cannot but look upon some of God's blessings, they return none to him; as men are liberal in thanks for their feasts and refreshings to the instruments, not to the author. As Basil: As little children that think they have their coats from the tailor that maketh them, and bringeth them home and putteth them on, by reason of their weak conceit. From this corruption is it, that men mislike disobedient sons and bad servants of other men, because it may be their own case to be abused so by their own; and the bad example of others may be a means to effect the like in theirs, when they no ways be like affected, when they are rebellious to the word of God. Masters will be bitter to servants for unthankfulness, negligence, and carelessness of their commodities, whereas they never take notice of their lying and swearing (that brings in gain) of profaning of God's day; because the one concerneth them, and may be means of their danger and loss, and the other nothing so near toucheth them, which maketh God give them over to their corruption, to be more unfaithful to them. To be brief, all hate a covetous man more than a prodigal man, and an oppressor more than a filthy liver; as St Augustine saith, because the one is such as he is more like to injure us than the other, though the other dishonour God as much, and do as much hurt. These and many such things argue directly the corruptions of men, that prefer duties to men before duties to God.

*Use* 2. Thus ought we to labour against this corruption, and to strive to fear God, to love him above all, to make more conscience of duties to him than to men; to be more grieved with sins that are against him than against others or ourselves, which will never be, unless we get our carnal affection changed, our carnal understanding reformed, our partial and preposterous judgment altered, and get our affection sanctified, our understanding enlightened, our judgment rectified. Then shall we love him and the things he loves, more grieve to offend him than the greatest man in the world, to alienate him than the best friend in the world, and more sorrow for it. Then shall we see him that is invisible as the author of all our blessings, and praise him more than men; then shall we measure sins, not as they are against us, but in themselves, and against God, against whom they are principally committed, and which makes them sins. Not *læsio nostri*, but *offensa Dei* makes them sins. Therefore we should hate them, those especially that least concern ourselves, that our zeal may appear to be a severity rightly grounded, and judgment well informed, as David: Ps. lxix. 9, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me, and the rebukes of them that rebuke thee, are fallen upon me;' when for his own he saith, Ps. xxxix. 9, 'I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it,' but God's wrongs he could not brook. As Moses for himself was very meek, Num. xii. 2, but God's dishonour, Exod. xxxii., made him exceedingly hot. Finally, let us not be partial, and express it in exacting those duties of man, that we are careless of performing in regard of God, like that people, Philip. ii. 21, who sought nothing but their own profit and for their person, which overthroweth all both in church and commonwealth.

The thing he reproves them for as contemners of him is, that they had offered that to him which they would not do to man and an inferior.

*Doct.* To offer unto God that which man will not accept, or to serve him as man will not be served, and with such service as he would not serve man withal, is a sin; and the contempt of him, or preferring man and the duties to him, before God and the duties to him, is a sin, Mat. xv. 6, 2 Cor. ii. 20–23.

*Reason* 1. Not because of the greatness of God's mind, who looks for so great things, for he will be content even with small matters after a man's ability, when there is a willing mind; a cup of cold water, or a widow's mite, or a pair of turtle doves and young pigeons. But because of the baseness of his conceit, who gives and brings such things, who, having more, and being able to bring better things, yet brings them not, as acccounting this good enough.

*Reason* 2. Because it comes from the corruption of the heart. Now such as the root is, such fruit it brings forth; for, as Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of filthiness? There is not one.' So of this; and such an egg, such a bird.

*Reason* 3. Because it is against the royal law, 'Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart,' &c. Now as St James in another case: chap. ii. 8, 9, 'But if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, which saith, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if you regard the persons, you commit sin, and are rebuked of the law as transgressors;' so in this: being against the royal law, accepting persons, any before God, must needs be evil and sin.

*Use* 1. To teach them to examine their lives and their practices, and to search whether this sin be not in them; that though they be careful of God, as they persuade themselves, yet they prefer man before him, and use him so as they would not use man, neither do, and as they know man would not accept. To give some particulars: they are to carry a present, to keep or recover the favour of some man; will they carry off the worst things they have, such as they cannot well

bestow otherwise? They will not, lest they should gain displeasure rather than favour; and yet for God and the uses he hath commanded, they will offer that which they have no use for otherwise. Are they not then guilty of this? Will any man serve all his youth against his prince as a rebel, and after, in old age, when he is unfit for service, come and proffer him his endeavour and fidelity? He will not, lest he should be punished by him, rather than accepted. Or say he called for his service when he was in health and strength, and he refused to work with him, will he offer it when he is weak and sick? he will not, lest he should be rejected and punished; and yet his youth will he spend against God in the service of sin and Satan, yea, his strength and health, though God called for it and challenged it; and offer himself when he is in age, weakness, and sickness, to do him service; and is he not guilty of this sin? Will a man, when he is in a good estate, in a flourishing and prosperous condition, refuse the friendship and familiarity of another man, and think when he is in misery to have it and enjoy it to his good and comfort? He will not, lest he be then scorned and rejected; as Judges xii. 7, 'Jephthah then answered the elders of Gilead, Did ye not hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? how then come you unto me now in the time of your tribulation?' And yet many men refuse the friendship and familiarity of God, by speaking to him in prayer, and hearing him speak to them again in preaching, when they are in health, wealth, prosperity, and flourishing estates; and think he should not be strange to them when they are in sickness, and trouble, and affliction, never fearing what is threatened, Prov. i. 24–26, 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and none would regard; but ye have despised all my counsel, and would none of my correction: I will also laugh at your destruction; and mock when your fear cometh.' Are not these then guilty of this sin? And so in many other particulars, which men practise, may they see themselves, if they do not deceive their own hearts, that they are guilty even as this people, and that God speaks to them also, as well as to the Jews.

He that shall find himself guilty of this (as who is he that shall bring his heart and life to this touchstone, that shall not find himself exceedingly guilty this way?) must humble himself, and repent himself for it as for other sins, which stands not in the sorrowing for and disliking of that which is past, but in striving against it for the future time, ever taking this as a rule, for so God intends it; for reproving their corruption by this, he intends it should be their rule to measure out duties to him by that duty which they owe unto man, and perform unto him, because they are naturally more prone to the one than to the other. As he made the love of a man's self the rule of his love to others, because it is more natural unto him by much; so in this, when any man is then about duties to God, if not otherwise we have a heart to do them in all simplicity, yet, as Chrysostom, *Hom.* xvi., in 1 *Tim.*, if not otherwise; yet, as servants obey us, so let us the Lord. So as we would do duties to men, do them to God, if not otherwise, and think whether the prince or a man of any worth would accept such things from us. If God send his messengers and ministers to us, bringing glad tidings of peace; think we if the prince should send an ambassador unto us with good comforts and great promises, how would we hear him and strive to it; how use him with reverence and respect; by no means deny him any obedience, much less abuse him in word or deed? So for the ministers, if they were sent from men to men, what faithfulness, care, and diligence would they use? Think when thou art to pray to God, how thou wouldst put up a petition to the prince, with what submission, reverence, attention, and humility. If thou art to come to his table, and called to it, think how, if the prince called thee to his, thou wouldst remove impediments, set aside excuses, come with all preparation as a guest fitting his table. God requires service of thee as his servant; think if thou wert the king's servant in ordinary, what wouldst thou do for the time thy service is required? do that, and wholly that, and little of thy own, the most of the day spent in his. So think if thou beest God's servant, what is required of all the days of thy life, the chiefest and greatest part of it? God requires alms and relief of thee, a portion for his servants and household, his Levites and ministers, and the poor. Do not use them as men do the king's takers, hide the best things from them, and think everything too good; thou knowest he will not then accept thy person, but be angry with thee. So in this, thou wilt say many ministers are wicked and unworthy, so thou mayest say of many takers and purveyors; yet if thou deny to them the king's due, though they shall be punished, yet shalt thou be checked. So in this, look to God, and not them.

Ver. 9. *And now, I pray you, pray before God, that he may have mercy upon us: this hath been by your means: will he reward your persons? saith the Lord of hosts.*

*And now, I pray you, pray before God.* After the prophet had reproved their sins, he comes to threaten them for them in the rest of this chapter; and these judgments or punishments threatened may be reduced to these two heads: they are either privative, that is, withdrawing God's mercies, ver. 9–14; or they are positive, an inflicting of a curse, ver. 14. The first is double, a rejecting of their prayers and sacrifices, ver. 9, and a rejecting of them who did pray or sacrifice, ver. 10; secondly, a removing of his worship from them to the Gentiles, ver. 11–13.

In this verse is the rejecting of their prayers.

*And now, pray.* This some take to be an exhortation to repentance, and to seek the Lord, as Zeph.

ii. 3; but some, and the most, understand this *ironicè* by an *ironia*, and think it is spoken in derision, like Isa. xlvii. 12, 1 Kings xxii. 15. So here he commands nothing, but derides them who thought thus to reconcile God by such sacrifices; as if he had said, Long may ye do thus, but prevail nothing at all.

*Pray before the Lord.* Some read, 'entreat the face of God,' that is, the favour of God; for so is face taken for favour, Ps. xxxi. 16. Some read, 'Pray to turn away the face of God,' that is his anger, as Ps. xxxiv. 16. Some 'before the Lord,' to the Lord himself, or in the place where he sheweth himself, seeking unto him by prayer, Ps. xxvii. 8. And of these this is the most probable.

*That he may have mercy upon us.* He alludeth, as it is thought, to that, Num. vi. 35, that he would be gracious and merciful unto us, forgive us our sins, and multiply his mercies and blessings upon us—upon us—prophet and people; the prophet putteth himself amongst the rest, as partaker of the same miseries and troubles.

*This hath been by your means.* Now the prophet layeth upon the priests the cause of this curse that is befallen the people; some refer this to the former part, shewing that they should pray, because they had been in fault. It is true that they ought chiefest to seek to turn to God that are authors of his wrath; but then should this be taken by way of exhortation, not upbraiding. But this is referred of some to the latter, shewing the reason why God will not hear nor accept, because they are authors of this evil, and therefore unfit to pray to God for the rest. This hath been by your means, by your fault hath this evil happened unto us; for it is not so much the fault of the people, who bring such imperfect sacrifice to the temple, as yours, who receive them for gain; and neither reprove the impiety of the people, nor instruct their ignorance, as by your office you ought.

*Will he?* That is, he will not; the interrogation denies more strongly.

*Regard your persons.* Will he accept your persons and faces? To accept one's face, is to shew himself courteous and gracious to any.

He will give* to none of you, nor accept your prayers. That which was spoken closely by an irony, and carried the face of a permission or command, that is now plainly and without figures spoken, shewing that he rejected both them and their sacrifices.

*Saith the Lord of hosts.* He that made all in heaven and earth, and is ruler over all creatures, the mighty Lord. As it were to meet with the base conceit they had of God, preferring every mean man before him.

In the first place, of this covert rejecting of their prayers; and first of the manner, then the matter. The manner is an ironical speech, or speech of derision.

*Doct.* It is lawful for the ministers of God and for holy men to use ironies, that is, scoffing speeches, deriding taunts against the wicked; for so is it here by the prophet. So Elijah: 1 Kings xviii. 27, 'And at noon Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he talketh, or pursueth his enemies, or is in his journey, or it may be that he sleepeth, and must be awaked.' Eccles. xi. 9, Isa. lxiv. 12, 13, &c., 1 Kings xxii. 15. Now, examples are warrants, where precepts be not against them.

*Reason.* Because this is a special means, as to shew a man's detesting of such things, so to draw them to the disliking of such things as they are affected with, or doat upon. Such speeches often more prevail than greater matters, men being more impatient of a scoff than many serious reproofs.

*Use* 1. This refelleth their conceit, who deny any use of these things, they deny there are any such things in the Scripture, they say they are lies.

*Obj.* They say that the apostle forbids them, Eph. v. 4; 'neither jesting.'

*Ans.* I answer, that there is an use of them, and that in the Scripture, as the former examples prove. Neither are they supposed unfitting the majesty of the Scripture, for though it be true that a man speaks one thing and thinks another, yet the manner of his words and speech doth bewray his mind, and that indeed there is no contrariety, for the hearer may easily discern his mind: as in that of Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 15; for verse 16, Ahab discerned well his meaning, that he did but scoff at him and his false prophets; so that he speaks as he thinks, not for the very words, but for the matter of the words. Neither makes the place in the Ephesians against this, because it forbids scurrility. When men scoff and reproach others rashly, when there can be no edifying of others, or good to the party, but their malice and disdain shewed, and as well the modest and temperate hearers as the sufferers are offended, which is that which differeth far from these things, we cannot bring these within compass of a lie, unless we make the Spirit of truth a lying Spirit. And in these a man hath no intent to have his words otherwise taken than he meaneth them.

*Use* 2. This warranteth the use of them, as sometimes our men have done in deriding and scoffing at the folly of papists, at their idols, and idolatrous service, and foolish superstitions; and ever are lawful to be used, when a man doth it not for revenge, or to wreak his anger and wrath upon some person that is his particular enemy, but to reprove and condemn impious and idolatrous worship, and such like.

Now for the matter; and first for that which is general here in the whole: God will not accept their prayers, that is the thing threatened.

*Doct.* It is a heavy thing and fearful judgment that men should pray and not be heard; that they make long prayers to God, but he will be as though he heard not, but reject their supplications, and they be as men beating the air. It is threatened here: so Isa. i. 15, 'And when you shall stretch out your hands, I will

* Qu. 'give ear'?—ED.

hide mine eyes from you: and though you make many prayers, I will not hear: for your hands are full of blood.' Prov. i. 28, 'Then shall they call on me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:' Hosea viii. 13. The contrary is promised as a blessing, and performed as a blessing, and acknowledged as a blessing: Isa. xxx. 19, 'Surely a people shall dwell in Zion and in Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more; he will certainly have mercy upon thee at the voice of thy cry; when he heareth, he will answer thee.' 2 Chron. vii. 14, Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.

*Reason* 1. Because it is a manifest sign that the persons are out of favour, and he is displeased with them: for the accepting of their prayer is a proof of the acceptation of person, because he first looks to the person, then the prayer; as first Abel was accepted, then his sacrifice.* And what can be more fearful, though it is not always felt, than to live out of favour with God? If in the displeasure of a prince there be danger, more of God's, to carry God's mark about with him, as Cain, that he is out of favour.

*Reason* 2. Because this is the means by which all blessings are obtained, the key that opens and shuts heaven, as Elijah. It opens the right hand of God for blessings, shuts the left hand from cursings.† Now when a man can receive no blessing, neither escape any curse, hath no means for it, because as good be without the means as when they are not regarded, must it not be a heavy thing? Many things befall many men without prayer, if that be no prayer which is without understanding and affection; yet they are but common blessings, such as are common to them and other men, yea, creatures unreasonable and senseless.

*Reason* 3. Because, as one saith, *verè novit rectè vivere, qui rectè novit orare;* so he can only live well, who can pray well. For as Saint Augustine, out of Saint Cyprian, *quæ implenda jubentur in lege, in oratione poscenda sunt;* but if they cannot or shall not be heard in praying, where shall they have strength to perform?

*Use.* 1. This noteth the senselessness of many men, who, though they pray often, and prevail seldom or never, yet never mourn under it as under a judgment, sorrow not much for it. It may be they can mourn that they have not that they desire, for want of the thing itself, but not that their prayers are not heard. It is that they grieve for, because they receive not from God, but never that their prayers are not received of God. Like him that puts up a petition to the prince, and is little or not at all troubled that he reads it not, but gives it over to another that will smother it; but his grief is that he relieves him not; and this appears, because their hearts desire any means else, though never so unlawful, to supply that they want, and to give that which God will not grant; and if the opportunity be offered, they will not stick to use them, as Saul did the witches, things condemned by him before. Secondly, because if those means be of force, and by them they prevail, their hearts are cheered up well enough, little or not at all sorrowing that he heard them not, not much caring though he did not. Thirdly, if they prevail not by those means, yet never will they return again to God, nor seek from him, if not the things, yet patience and comfort in the want of them.

*Use* 2. To teach the whole church, and particulars of it, to groan under this, as under a judgment of God, that their prayers are not heard. They ask and receive not, they seek and find not, they knock and it is not opened unto them. And yet they asked things agreeable to God's word, such as in their best understanding are for God's glory and their own good; yea, and their prayers were made in faith, in fear, and with tears, not doubtingly, rashly, and carelessly, for which men had need to pray they be not imputed as sins to them. I say, they ought to grieve, not so much for the want of the things, as because they are not heard, because their prayers are not received; as David, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.

*And now pray before the Lord.* It is an irony deriding these, but yet instructing others, as Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 15, though he derided Ahab and his false prophets, yet he meant to instruct good Jehoshaphat. And so here, though those were unfit to pray, yet he teacheth others what is a fit time, and when men ought to humble themselves, now when judgments were threatened and at the door.

*Doct.* Then is it high time and full tide for men to pray and humble themselves, when judgments are denounced and threatened, and are imminent, and not to stay till they befall them, and they feel them. So much our prophet would teach the good by his ironical deriding and scoffing of the bad: Zeph. ii. 1, 2, 'Gather yourselves, even gather you, O nation, not worthy to be loved; before the decree come forth, and ye be as chaff, that passeth in a day, and before the fierce wrath of the Lord come upon you, and before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you.' So is the command, Joel ii. 15–17, so hath been the practice of the church and ministers. In Esther there they fast when the decree was out, before the execution, chap. iv. 16, 17. So the prophets, Jer. iv. 19, Micah i. 8, yea, this is manifest in Nineveh and Ahab.

*Reason* 1. Because the Lord shall have his end, and that he seeks for; for he threatens not because he would punish, but because he would be prevented in punishing: *pœnitentiam mavult quàm pœnam cœlestis Pater* (Just. Mart. Apol. 2.), for if he would punish, he could do it without admonishing.

* In sacrificiis quæ Abel et Cain primi obtulerunt, non munera eorum Deus, sed corda intuebatur, ut ille placeret in munere, qui placebat in corde.—*Cypr. de Orat. Dom.* 11.

† Oratio justi clavis est cœli; ascendit precatio, et descendit Dei miseratio, *Aug.* Ut nihil sanctum nisi illo sanctificante, nihil potens nisi illo roborante. Prayer the wall of the city. Ita nihil felix, nihil auspicatum, nisi illo prosperante.—*Cypr.*

*Reason* 2. Because it is wisdom ever to prevent an evil; if to withstand the beginnings of an evil, much more to prevent the beginnings. Diseases are with more ease prevented, than, when seized upon a part, removed.

*Reason* 3. Because if it be not prevented it will come, for if he speaks he will do. He is not as man, 1 Sam. xv. 29, and they must humble themselves, repent, and change, or else it will not be.

*Use* 1. To reprove and condemn the security of many, who, for all the threatening and menacing of God, yet do not pray nor humble themselves; never take it to be time, till the hand and rod be upon their backs; such as Jeremiah complaineth of, chap. viii. 6, 7, 'I hearkened and heard, but none spake aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to their race, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Even the stork in the air knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people knoweth not the judgment of the Lord; preferring even unreasonable creatures and silly birds before them, in their kind more wise than they. Therefore it is that they are ready to reproach and deride the word, specially if the blow come not with it; as Jer. xx. 8, and say as they, Jer. xxiii. 33, 'What is the burden of the Lord?' which is in them either from the root of hypocrisy within their hearts, being always like to Haman: Esther vi. 6, 'When Haman came in, the king said unto him, what shall be done unto the man whom the king will honour? Then Haman thought in his heart, to whom would the king do honour more than to me?' He thought none to be so much in the king's favour as himself; so they think none to be in the favour of God but they. If they see anything upon others, they judge it is justly for their sins, as Luke xiii. 1; but as for themselves, they are God's white sons, they shall never miscarry. Or it is from that trust and confidence they have in their riches and estate, as Prov. xviii. 11, 'The rich man's riches are his strong city, and as an high wall in his imagination.' They are as rebels in a strong city well victualled, well armed, and well manned, that stand out at defiance against all threats, and never will submit themselves; if ever, not till he hath made a breach upon them; thinking he is never able to do it till it be done. And then, when it is too late, could they be content to do it; but it is their folly and madness, losing their opportunity of submitting betime.

*Use* 2. To teach every one to be wise to know his time, when the tide is full, to humble himself, and betake himself to God; not to stay till he smite, but when he speaketh, Amos iii. 6. When the trumpet is blown, it is high time to fear, and fear makes men fly either to God or from God; from him there is no place to be safe in, for where can he be hid that his hand cannot find him out? It is therefore wisdom to bide in their place, but to change their manners and minds, so may they change the sentence and thing denounced. Chrysostom,* speaking of the Ninevites, When the judge gave sentence, the guilty reversed the sentence by repentance. They run not out of their city, but staying there, altered the sentence. When they heard their houses should fall, they forsook not their houses, but their sins. This ought men to do, betake themselves to the Lord, by forsaking their manners; this is a wise man's part: Prov. xxii. 3, 'A prudent man seeth the plague, and hideth himself; but the foolish go on still, and are punished.' But where can he be safe, and be indeed hid, but with God himself? Prov. xviii. 10, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is exalted.' God must be the sanctuary to them against his own wrath: Ps. xxxii. 7, 'Thou art my secret place, thou preservest me from trouble; thou compassest me about with joyful deliverance.' And in conclusion, this may instruct us and our times. God hath spoken, the trumpet hath been blown, let us fear, and think it high time we return to him, not deferring, lest the next thing be the blow and the judgment, when it will be too late. Think we of that: Heb. iii. 7, 8, 'To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' Meeting by this with the voice of Satan, saith Basil, who saith, Serve me to-day, and God to-morrow. I beseech you be acquainted with the craft of the enemy; he dares not advise thee altogether and presently to forsake God (for he knows Christians would not endure that), but he deals craftily, being a serpent, and subtle to beguile; he steals upon us for the present, and puts off the next day for God, and when that day comes, still he puts it off to the next.* Therefore the Lord, to meet with that, comes thus calling upon us *to-day;* partly, *quia, qui non est hodie, cras minùs aptus erit:* because he that is unfit to-day, to-morrow will be more unfit; and partly for that this is the time, lest judgment do come upon us, and we have no evasion, for we cannot tell what to-morrow may bring forth.

*Before God.* Though he deride these, yet he directs others, and teacheth them that in prayer they are before the Lord.

*Doct.* They who pray are before God's face, and in

* Quomodo non mirabile, quod quando Judex sententiam tulerit, per pœnitentiam rei sententiam solverunt; non enim urbem fugerunt sicut nos nunc, sed manentes sententiam repressere. Audierunt quod ædificia corruerent, sed peccata fugerunt, non discesserunt quisque de domo sua, sicut nunc nos, sed discessit de viâ suâ.—*Chrysost hom.* 5, *ad pop. Ant.*

* Mihi hodiè, cras Domino: nosce obsecro inimici dolos; ut omnino à Deo averteris, consulere non audet: novit enim hoc grave admodum Christianis, verùm artibus insidiosis aggreditur, intelligit autem quemadmodum nos præsens tempus libenter recipimus, omnisque actio humana in præsens contendit et spectat: quamobrem hodiernum tempus nobis furatur astutè, et spem facit crastini, postquam crastinum venerit, rursus malus divisor sibi hodiernum, crastinum verò Domino dari petit.—*Basil. Exhortatio ad Bapt.*

his presence. If they who hear be, as Cornelius said he and his company were, Acts x. 33, 'before the Lord,' to hear one speak in his name, and him speaking mediately to them, more when they speak immediately to himself. Therefore was the ark of God's presence ever in the temple, before which they prayed, and from which they received answer, Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

*That he may have mercy upon us.* It is that they were commanded to pray for before, and to require or the people.

f *Doct.* In prayer men must not ask what they list, but that for which they have a commandment to ask, and a promise to receive.

*Use* 1. To reprove all those prayers, and those who frame their prayers not according to God's will, but their own lusts and fancies; whatsoever their vain hearts desire, that they utter before the Lord, and make their requests unto him for it, never regarding whether good or evil, how agreeable or disagreeable to the word, having their own affections the rules of their prayers. Such prayers they would be ashamed to put up to men as they prefer to God, making Christ a mediator for them (if he will do it for them) for things they would blush to desire the help of man in; some praying as Saint Augustine, who confesseth of himself that he prayed to God to let him live a little longer in his sins; so they in their corruptions, desiring still means and opportunities to fulfil their lusts and desires. Some ask temporal things simply, as they, Ps. lxxviii. 18, who asked meat for their lust; who importune the Lord to prosper their journey and endeavour for honours, as Balaam, be the means what may be, who have their prayers sometimes in mercy denied, as James iv. 3, and sometimes in wrath granted to them, as Ps. lxxix. 29–31.

*Mercy.* That is, be gracious and favourable unto us, and lift up his gracious countenance upon us.

*Doct.* In prayer, men ought especially to pray for God's favour. The chiefest thing they ought to desire is his mercy and loving kindness, 2 Cor. vii. 14; this is called seeking God's face.

*Reason* 1. Because this is the fountain from whence all things else come, all good things we receive; for, Rom. viii. 32, 'He who spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all to death, how shall he not with him give us all things also?' And the cause of that was his favour and love: John iii. 16, 'For God so loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

*Reason* 2. Because no temporal blessing, asked never so earnestly, nay, though it be sought with tears, as Esau his blessing, can be obtained till a man have his sins forgiven. Hence Matt. vi. 11, 12, the petitions are joined with a copula as inseparable.

*Use* 1. This reproveth their folly and error, who pray more for the things of this life than for the favour of God or remission of their sins, 2 Chron. vii. 14.

*Use* 2. To teach us to pray for temporal things, but specially God's favour and the remission of our sins.

*For us.* Both prophet and people. He would be prayed for as well as the people, acknowledging, as it seemeth, those things in himself which he reproved in them, the better to affect them.

*Doct.* No man is so excellent in the church of God, so endued or abounding with gifts and graces, that needeth not the prayers of the rest. This the prophet sheweth, that he exempteth not himself, but would be prayed for as others. So Hosea xiv., sure including himself. This our Saviour Christ shewed, when, teaching his church in the person of his disciples to pray, he taught them to pray one for another, and taught them they had need of the prayers one of another, Matt. vi. This is shewed by Saint Paul's earnest request unto them, Rom. xv. 30, repeated to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. i. 7, so Col. iv. 3, 2 Thes. iii. 1, and for the saints, Eph. vi. 18.

*Reason* 1. Because his excellency excludeth him not from the communion of saints, as the excellency, beauty, or proportion of any part doth not exclude it from the fellowship of other members. Now one part of this communion is prayer one for another.

*Reason* 2. Because his excellency is imperfect, for here all things are but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9; therefore he hath need of prayers, as his own, so others', many prevailing more with God than one.

*Reason* 3. Because the excellency and goodness a man hath is (as Basil, *exhort. ad Bapt.*, brings in some making the objection) *thesaurus servatu difficilis*, a treasure hard to be kept. Therefore, as he said, *opus est vigilia*, we had need to be more watchful; and he adviseth to take three adjutors, *orationem, jejunium, psalmodiam*, prayer, fasting, and singing psalms. Now as for keeping of treasures, a man will use other means and helps, and all little enough; so in this should he be careful.

*Use* 1. This reproveth those who think they have no need of the prayers of others, but can pray well enough for themselves. Their own private prayer is sufficient; they need not the prayers of others, or the public congregations, as some men think they have no need of public teaching, they can instruct themselves well enough with reading of good books at home; so for prayer: they can enrich themselves of themselves, and need not the helps of others. If any think I wrong men in judging thus of them, I answer, No, because I judge by their fruit and practice. For, when their little love to the assembly of the church appeareth, by their negligent frequenting of them, when prayers are made and the word preached, St Jerome tells me directly, that some think they need not the preaching of the church, some not the prayers, but think they are able enough to instruct themselves, and of themselves to prevail with God, which riseth commonly either from ignorance or knowledge: the ignorance of their infirmities or the knowledge of their

graces, that makes them not desire the helps of others, as Moses took Aaron and Hur with him when he went to pray, being privy to his own infirmities. This makes them disdain others, being puffed up with pride and self-conceit.

*Use* 2. To instruct every man, be his excellency what it may be, to affect and desire the prayers of others, of the ministers and public congregations, and the people of God; for besides that God is in a special manner there present (the cause why David and his men so desired the temple, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 3, 7, so men, in desiring them, shew themselves to delight in the presence of God, as gracious children in beholding the face of their father), there is much profit to be had by them. The benefit is not small, O Lord, that thou shouldst be praised by many of us, and prayed unto by many for us.* For a man shall have not only the benefit of the prayers of one or two, but many hundreds; and if one faithful prayer prevail much, James v., how much more many? Thus shall he enjoy the communion of saints, which is a worthy thing, so shall he better increase in the graces and blessings received, and keep that he hath; for the best here, and the most perfect must not imagine himself to be already a burning and shining light within the house of heaven, where, once kindled, there is no danger of any winds to blow it out, but must remember that he is yet in the open air, and must cover and defend the light he carries with both hands, nor be confident though the air seem to be calm; for, sooner than he is aware, if he take away his hand, his light may be puffed out, saith St Bernard.†

*Ques.* If the prayers of living saints be so needful and profitable, and whose prayers we may desire and entreat, why not also of dead saints? why may not their prayers be profitable to us, and we desire them?

*Ans.* How profitable soever their prayers may be to us, and how certain soever it may be that they do pray for us, as some think with Bernard, *Ser.* ii. *in Vigil. Nat. Dom.*, that Rev. vi. 10 doth prove it, because of the answer, ver. 11, yet to desire their prayers as those who are living, is not lawful, because it is without precept or precedent in the Scripture, because it is against reason and the Scripture. For, first, that they know not what we do, nor hear our prayers, is manifest, Isa. lxiii. 16. Again, how should they come to the knowledge of them, they in heaven, we in earth, and dispersed in many several places? As for the answer of the Rhemists out of Jerome against Vigilantius, that they are in every place, because they must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, Rev. xiv. 4; if the place be understood of them who imitate Christ upon earth, and not of the souls departed, as it may be, at least it must be understood of all the elect, whereof part are in the church in the earth, then the conclusion must be, they who are upon earth must be everywhere as well as they who are in heaven, which is most absurd. But admit it of the saints in heaven: how is it possible they should be everywhere? Not at one and the same instant, they say; but such is their motion, speed and agility to be where they list, and their power and will is answerable, as well as the devil can be everywhere to work mischief. To which I answer that their comparison is absurd, for the devils by propriety of nature and the Lord's permission, have such passage in the world. So have not the souls of the saints, for they are appointed by God to rest, Rev. vi. 11 and xiv. 13. What rest, if they must be tossed up and down by the breaths of men, some time in England, some time in France, &c.? But say they did, how were it possible they should hear the prayers of all that call upon them at one and the same instant, if they be not in many several places at one and the same instant? And if it be impossible, the prayers must needs be vain. Besides, if it were not, yet in that which papists give their reason for, it is made more abominable, that is, to make way for themselves to the favour of God, even as by nobles and great men we procure access to the king. *Numquid tam demens est aliquis*, &c. Is there any so mad, saith Ambrose in *Epist. ad Rom. cap.* i., or so careless of his life, that he will give the honour of the king to a nobleman, to procure him access to him, when he shall be guilty of treason when he cometh before him? And yet they think they are not guilty of treason to God, who, under pretence of seeking God by saints, do give unto the creatures the honour of God the creator, and (forsaking the Lord) worship their fellow-servants. And though there be (saith he) some reason why they should make way to a king by his nobles and pensioners, because he is a man, and knows not who are fit to be trusted with the commonwealth; yet unto the Lord, who knows all things, and knows the worths and worthiness of men, there needs no spokesman, but only a holy mind. Thus far he. But to add to him that this thing is without precept in Old or New Testament, confessed by themselves. Eccius grants not in the Old, because the fathers were then *in limbo* (a good reason against him), and the Israelites were marvellous prone to idolatry. Not in the New, lest the Gentiles should return to their idolatry, and lest the apostles should be too vainglorious and ambitious if they had commanded it; and so a great difference and strong reason why we may pray to saints living, but not to saints departed.

*For us.* He separates not himself from this church for all the corruption of it in priest and people; he

* Non parvus est fructus, Domine, ut à multis tibi gratiæ agantur de nobis, et à multis rogeris pro nobis.—*August. Confess.* x. 4.

† Sic ardens et lucens nondum in domo se esse confidat, ubi sine omni timore ventorum accensum lumen deportatur, sed meminerit se esse sub dio et utraque manu studeat operire quod portat, nec credat aeri, etiamsi videat esse tranquillum; repentè enim, et hora qua non putaverit, mut abitur, et si vel modicum manus remiserit, lumen extinguetur. —*Bern Ser.* iii. *in Vigil. nat. Dom.* l.

forsakes not their assemblies, but communicates with them in their service and sacrifices.

*Doct.* Men ought not to separate themselves from a visible congregation or assembly, a visible church, for the abuse of it, and the corruption of it, it being not in fundamentals. As here the prophet did not, neither read we of any prophet who left the church, but in most corrupt ages remained there, reproving and threatening them, praying and mourning for them, but not forsaking them. It is that, Ezek. ix. 4, they are noted, as St Augustine observeth, that mourn for the corruptions of the time, not who separate themselves from the church. In the New Testament we find not Christ nor his apostles to forsake the church, but remain in it, though marvellous corrupt, teaching, reproving, correcting, mourning for it. So of the pastors of the six churches of Asia, their corruptions noted, and their angels biding with them. To this purpose is that Heb. x. 24, 25, 38, 39.

*Reason* 1. Because no man ought to separate himself from the true church of Christ. Now, such is an assembly professing the true faith, notwithstanding other corruption; for as holiness, if it might be supposed without true faith, cannot make a true church, but false doctrine and error in the foundation overthrows it for being a church, so *è contra*, corruptions in manners cannot make it no church, when true faith is taught and maintained.

*Reason* 2. Because separation and excommunication from a particular church is the most heavy and greatest censure of the church; which as no man should incur by his evil behaviour, so no man ought to inflict upon himself for the corruptions of others, who haply deserve to be separated themselves.

*Use* 1. To condemn all those who withdraw themselves from our assemblies, because of corruptions amongst us, crying out of those who will remain among them, to the benefit of the good that is there to be had. But to such an one I say, as Augustine answered Petilian,* that he did not well to leave Christ's heap of corn, because the chaff was in it till the great winnowing day, and that he shewed himself to be lighter chaff, driven out by the wind of temptation, that flew out before the coming of Christ the winnower. What folly is it for a man to leave the jewels and plate in the gold-finer's shop, because of the iron tongs and black coals! What warrant have they, whenas Noah left not the ark for all the unclean beasts!

*Use* 2. To teach every man not to be so offended for the corruption of the times, as to separate himself from the church for them. If they had loved peace, they had not broken unity, saith Augustine.† And in another place, a vessel of honour ought to tolerate those things that are vile, and not therefore to forsake the house of God, lest himself be cast out as a vessel of dishonour, or as dung.* That certainly which is, 1 Cor. v. 13, 'Put away from yourselves the wicked person,' is to be understood of those who have authority, which if they exercise not is their sin, not mine or thine. Shall I forsake the good, and the church where I may be safe, for their evil? *Nec quisquam sine consensu cordis sui ex ore vulneratur alieno.* Let no man then separate himself; for why should a good, pure, and sound member separate itself from those that are corrupt, and cut itself off, both to make the whole worse, and to lose to itself the good it might have by abiding?

*For us.* The prophet who had the least hand in the sins, and was the least cause of the burden, he fears, and as it were mourns, and seeketh how to avoid it, when the priests, who were the cause of it, are secure and careless.

*Doct.* It often falls out, that the faithful mourn, and fear the plagues they foresee, when they who have deserved them sleep securely, and rather provoke God still: Micah i. 8, 'Therefore will I mourn.'

*This hath been by your means.* Here is the reason why God will not accept their prayers, because they are authors and principal causes of the evils and sins amongst them.

*Doct.* The prayers of hypocrites and wicked men, whether ministers or magistrates, or private men, whether superiors or inferiors, cannot be profitable to the church, nor others for whom they pray, nor accepted of God. This is manifest here, as also by that, where the prayers of the wicked are rejected, with divers such places. This the Lord taught, when in his law he commanded that the priest should first offer for himself, Lev. iv. 3, and Heb. v. 3.

*Reason* 1. Because they are not profitable for themselves, neither shall be accepted, much less for others. Not for themselves, Isa. i. and lxvi.

*Reason* 2. Because they are in God's sight abominable, Prov. xv. 8; such cannot prevail with him.

*Obj.* Balaam prayed for the people of God, and was heard for them, and yet he was a wicked man, Num. xxiii. 19, 20.

*Ans.* A truth it is, St Augustine so answereth Parmenio (contr. Epist. Parm. lib. ii. cap. 8), proving they ought not to separate themselves, as they taught, because men are polluted. But for the example I think we may say, Balaam was not heard, saving his judgment, because he certainly never prayed; he did prophesy indeed in a certain form of prayer; therefore that speech of his is accounted a blessing, because he did ominate and foretell happy things which would be-

* Non habes quod objicias, frumentis Dominicis paleam usque ad ventilationem ultimam sustinentibus, à quibus tu nunquam recessisses, nisi levior palea vento tentationis, et ante adventum ventilatoris avolasses.—*Aug. contr. Petilian.* cap i. 18.

† Si amarent pacem, non discinderent unitatem.—*Aug. contr. lit. Petiliani*, lib. 24.

* Vas in honore santificatum, debuit tolerare ea quæ sunt in contumelia, nec propter hoc relinquere domum charitatis Dei, ne vel vas in contumeliam, vel stercus projectum Dei domo sit.—*Aug. contr. epist. Parm.* lib. 3, 5.

fall to the people of God. But he never prayed indeed, for his heart went against it, it was utterly against his will; who, for the wages of Balak, would rather have desired to curse, only he was compelled to it by the Spirit of God. Therefore he was not heard, which prayed not; but the Spirit of God, which in the good worketh the affections, and suggesteth words, did only put such words into his mouth, for any good that should come by them to the people of God, as for the terror and destruction of Balak, who had set himself against the people of God, to shew him, that not they before him, but he should fall before them.

*Use* 1. This sheweth the folly and the vanity of the reason of some popish and popishly affected, who plead for lenity, connivance, and impunity, because the king and his children, the realms and dominions, may enjoy so many prayers from them unto the Lord; their Jesuits, and priests, and all would pray for the state. The argument is of force, to urge a state to use kindness, and to entreat lovingly, and to speak comfortably unto, those both ministers and people, that are truly religious, as Darius did well conceive it: Ezra vi. 9, 10, 'And that which they shall have need of, let it be given unto them day by day; whether it be young bullocks, or rams, or lambs, for the burnt-offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests that are in Jerusalem, that there be no fault; that they may have to offer sweet odours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the king's life, and for his sons'; for they often stand in the gap, and keep away much evil, yea, they prevail for much good. One of these is better than a multitude of others (as Chrysostom, of wicked and godly, *Hom.* 26, *ad pop. Ant.*, as one precious stone is better than a thousand pebbles). And that breeds but confusion and subversion of all, when we desire multitudes, as they do in theatres, and not an honest and good multitude. It is, I say, of force for the good, but not for these wicked hypocrites and treasonable priests and Jesuits, and all such, specially understanding papists, who have given up their name to antichrist, whose prayers cannot profit the king and state; who, if they pray, pray but as Balaam blessed God's people, against their hearts; who, if they could pray with their hearts, yet should never prevail, nor be accepted, being as they are. And to them we may use that of Tertullian (Apolog. cap. 34).* Be thou religious towards God, who wouldst have him to be favourable to the emperor.

*Use* 2. This teacheth the fearful case and condition of that church and state, where they who should stand in the gap and breach before him to turn away his wrath lest he destroy them, are men themselves who provoke God's wrath; of whom it may be said, as Ezek. xiii. 4, 5, 'O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the waste places; ye have not risen up in the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Undoubtedly that state must expect a judgment from God, besides that it is one itself, when God takes away good men, such as were the chariots and horsemen of Israel, their defence and preservation, who prevailed more by their prayers, as Moses, Exod. xvii., than all the host did by their spears, specially when their successors are wicked and profane men, that provoke God to wrath by their wicked lives. It goes hard with the church when her good prophets are by God forbidden to pray for it, as Jer. xiv. 11. But yet if they remain with them, though they cannot prevail at one time yet they may at another, but more hard when he takes them away, when they are without hope of having them to stand up for them again, but worst of all, when they are such as are of lewd life, who thereby provoke God against them. Therefore these both should be mourned for, the loss of the one and the succession of the other; for the former are, as the king said, the chariots and the horsemen of Israel; the latter are the chariots and horsemen against Israel, for, not being with it, they are against it. Of good ministers we may say as Ps. cxxvii. 4, 5, as are the arrows in the hand of the strong man, so are they who are her good ministers. Blessed is the church that hath a quiverful of them; here is her prosperity and peace, hence is the ruin and overthrow of her enemies. And on the contrary may we say of wicked ministers, whose prayers shall never be heard for the church, but rather against it.

*Obj.* This granted, then, have we a warrant to separate ourselves from the church or congregation where a wicked minister is, for why should we join with a minister that God will not hear?

*Sol.* The Donatists made the same objection to Augustine (*loco prædicto*); to which the sum of his answer is, that when they pray with the congregation they are heard, though for their own wickedness they deserve to be rejected, because of the piety and devotion of the people who join with them; whence I collect, that though the minister speak the words, yet they are not his prayers only, but the prayers of the church. As in another case, though the minister deliver the signs, yet it is not his sacrament but Christ's, and so may be profitable notwithstanding the corruption and insufficiency of the minister; so in this. For this must be understood, that in the congregation some one must conceive a prayer for all the rest, lest in a multitude there should be confusion and tumult, if every one should in his own words utter his prayer in the church; therefore, the minister he is the mouth of the church. If he be a faithful one, he shall be heard together with the church; if otherwise, not he, but the faithful people, who speak to God by his words. But you will say, then, what loss have we if the minister be wicked? I answer, many ways; because the corruption of men is such that as they like

* Esto religiosus in Deum, qui vis cum imperatori propitium.—*Tertul. Apolog.* cap. 34.

the word and sacrament worse because they dislike him that brings them, and find not such joy and comfort in them as by his hands they like; so they cannot be nor are not so affected to join in prayer with a man they like not, or think not well and reverently of, to whose person they have just exceptions, so their prayers are not as they should be, neither he with that spirit and affection utters their petitions to God which might affect their hearts to more zeal in prayer. Besides, they want the benefit of his prayers in private, who should mourn for them and pray for them when they are following their necessary affairs, or their convenient pleasures, or are living in their sins; be a Moses to hold up his hands for them, a Job to sacrifice for them; as Jer. xiii. 17; or as Paul, Acts xx. 31. All which a good and faithful minister will do; but he that is not will be as careless and secure as he can be, and never do it, or, if he should, yet not be accepted.

*This hath been by your means.* The sins of the people are imputed to the priests, because they taught them not better, nor reproved them of this. *Ante*, ver. 7.

*Will he regard your person?* He will not; your office, and place, and dignity in the church shall not make him receive your prayers.

*Doct.* As God, to elect and call men, and to give them the promises and possession of heavenly things, is moved by no outward privilege or dignity of the flesh, so to hear their prayers and to accept their service, is he not moved by any dignity of person, any virtue of place or office, nor by outward privilege, if faith and holiness of life be wanting. Here it is apparent in these priests, not accepted for all the dignity of their office. Cain was the first born, and had that privilege, yet for all that God received not his offering, but Abel's, Gen. iv.; so betwixt the pharisee and publican, Luke xviii. 10, &c.; as betwixt the rich men and the widow, Mark xii. 41–43.

*Reason* 1. Because he is no accepter of persons, Acts. x.; that is, for any outward thing, for he accepts for inward. It is borrowed from judges, who, being corrupt, are swayed not with the uprightness of the cause, but with the person, his place, his honour, his riches, and such like, which being denied in God, shews why he accepts not the wicked.

*Reason* 2. Because he looks not, as man looks, upon outward things.

*Use* 1. This will serve to check a corruption in our times, and not in ours only, but that which hath ever been in all ages; great men, nobles, and princes, wealthy and worshipful personages, persuade themselves, and so are soothed up by their flatterers that a little thing from them is greatly accepted of God, a few cold prayers, a little devotion, a careless hearing, shall be accepted from them, though they never trouble themselves for the true fear of God, and to work righteousness; whereas first, in reason, there is more due to God where he hath given more. But why should he accept less from them, because they are great? As if he were an accepter of persons, or as if they were or could be great in respect of him.

*Use* 2. Let no estate hinder a man from this service, for the best excuseth not, the meanest makes us no less acceptable.

Ver. 10. *Who is there even among you that would shut the doors, and kindle not fire on mine altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*

*Who is there among you?* Here is the rejecting of them and their sacrifices threatened, which is the main point in the verse; but in the former part, as divers of the learned do so take it, he returns unto his former expostulation, reproving the priests for their ingratitude and corruption of his worship. And then it will be read, 'Who is there among you that will shut the doors; or do you kindle fire on my altar for nothing?' And some expound it that the priests would not so much as shut the doors till they had their wages paid, others that they did nothing in God's service but they were rewarded for; God arguing their unthankfulness to him by his bounty to them. But others take the words as they are here read, both more agreeable to the original, as also more squaring to the present matter, to shew how he rejected them and their sacrifice, when he wisheth that somebody would shut the doors of the temple, or that they would offer none at all, and so keep out the priests that they could not come to sacrifice anything upon his altar, which he did so distaste and dislike; and so it is, I would rather you should not offer at all than as you do.

For the particular words. 'And kindle not fire upon mine altar,' *q. d.* that ye might not come to offer upon mine altar, kindle not my altar, so in the original, a *metonymia*. 'In vain,' *id est*, to no end, the word signifieth, freely, Job i. 9; for nothing, so unjustly without cause, Ps. lxix. 5; so scot-free, without punishment, Prov. i. 11; to no end or purpose, Job ii. 3, Prov. i. 17; so here.

*I have no pleasure in you.* The former is a wish, this is the reason of the wish. All is in vain, and to no end, because I like not you, and will none [of] your sacrifices. He shews that he esteemed not these offerings, not from the nature, but from the mind of him who did offer them. If he were endued with piety and holiness, God would accept his offerings and service; if otherwise, God would take no delight in them for all their offerings.

*Neither will I accept an offering at your hands.* These offerings he simply refuseth not, being things he had commanded, but because they were offered by them; *q.d.*, I am so far from accepting at your hands these corrupt and imperfect sacrifices, that if they were never so perfect and agreeing to the laws of men prescribed, yet I would not accept: you please me

not, your gifts and offerings cannot be accepted of me. Here is first a wish, and the reason of it; he wished that they would offer no sacrifices to him at all, rather do him no service than do it as they did.

*Doct.* The Lord had rather have no service done unto him of the sons of men, than to have it done carelessly and negligently, corruptly, and not as he hath commanded it. So is it manifest from this place, as from that Isaiah i. 11–13, and lviii. 1, 2, and lxvi. 3; Mat. vii. 22, and vi. 1, 5, 16.

*Reason* 1. Because this argues contempt of God, and, as we may speak, of his person; yea, oftentimes more contempt than not to do the works of his service at all; for where any man is duly respected, either for love or fear, there the duties and offices to be performed unto him are done neither negligently nor carelessly; as the child that honours his father, the servant that fears his master, do with all diligence and care their duties. Where they are done coldly or cursorily, there is not the respect of the person that should be. Again, duties may be omitted without contempt, as of ignorance, not knowing what a man ought to do; of infirmity or an erroneous conscience, because he thinks he may not do that which he cannot do in all perfection; but to do them carelessly, and that wittingly with corruption, can have no such excuse, and so more contempt.

*Reason* 2. Because the Lord hath no need of the sacrifice and service of men; a man cannot be profitable to him, as he may be to his neighbour. It is nothing to him that thou art righteous, that thou prayest, or performest any other service unto him. Job xxii. 2, 'May a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself?' Therefore he, as a rich king, values not the gift, but the mind of the giver; he looks more to the manner of doing than the deed; he respects more the heart than the hand, the inward affection than the outward action. No marvel, then, if he had rather have nothing, than carelessly and corruptly done. And this made him esteem more of the widow's two farthings and mites than of the rich men's treasure. God rather hears a pure conscience than prayers.*

*Obj.* Better Christ be preached anyways than not at all, Philip. i. 15, 16, 18.

*Sol.* It is better in regard of others who have the benefit of it, and to whom by such leaden and stony conduits God conveyeth the water of life, as a gardener doth water to his plants; but it is not better in regard of them who do it, for it maketh their condemnation more grievous. Judas preached condemnation to himself, and yet no doubt converted some, as the rest did. Noah was glad he could get some to build his ark, himself and his sons being no workmen fit for it, but it profited them not a whit that built it, as good never have done it.

* Deus puram magis conscientiam exaudit, quàm preces. — *August. contr. lit. Petil. Donat.* lib. ii. cap. 53.

*Use* 1. This may teach us what to judge of our church-papists, who for fear of law, avoiding of loss, for escaping of imprisonment, do resort to our congregations without conscience and care, they are worse than those who do refuse to come, than open recusants; for if to come to church for a show, to profane God's worship, and to do it rashly for sinister respects, and in hypocrisy, be worse than not doing, then they are greater offenders in coming than others in abstaining. The Shechemites were greater sinners, with Hamor and Shechem his son, in taking the sacrament of circumcision for profit, and satisfying their pleasure, and to make a prey as they thought of Israel, Gen. xxxiv., than the other Gentiles who refused it. So in this; they come to church for advantage or profit, or saving of that they have; then is it better they should not come at all. Nay, not so, but it is less evil, not more good. The goodness is that they labour to be instructed in that they ought, and to know how they ought, and to endeavour to come with care and conscience, as is required. In the mean time, he that abstains and comes not, is less evil than he that doth come carelessly, &c.

*Obj.* Why, then, should magistrates compel men to the service of God, when he shall make them sin, and sin more than if they abstain?

*Ans.* The magistrate may not compel any man to do evil, that is a thing simply forbidden of God; but he may compel a man to do that which he may sin in doing of it. Things that men do are of three sorts: good, and commanded; evil, and forbidden; indifferent, and neither commanded nor forbidden of God. In this last the magistrate ought to have a special and tender respect to the conscience of his subject, though it be erroneous, specially when they are things of no moment; the doing of them little profits the church or commonwealth, and the omitting of them doth prejudice it nothing at all. For the other, he is not to respect the erroneous consciences of men, as not to suffer them unpunished for evil doing, though they should pretend conscience in it;* so is he not to abstain from compelling them to that which is good; for that evil is adjoined to it, it is not his fact that commandeth, but comes from their infidelity and corruption who are commanded, of which he cannot be accused when he hath carefully endeavoured that they be duly and rightly instructed and informed; for when he may say, The things I require are commanded in the Scriptures, I have done my best endeavour that you may know the truth, and not perish, and I will not cease for hereafter to persuade, and exhort, and command you. Do you need the Scriptures? Confer

* Ad fidem nullus est cogendus invitus, sed per severitatem, imo et per misericordiam Dei, tribulationum flagellis perfidia castigari.—*August. cont. lit. Petil.* lib. ii. cap. 38. And again, Si quæ igitur adversus vos leges constitutæ sunt, non bene facere cogimini, sed malè facere prohibemini. — *Ibid.*

with the ministers, pray God to open your eyes; he hath then done his part.

*Use* 2. This teacheth the fearful condition of such as only do and perform the service of God but marvellous carelessly and corruptly; they hear the word, they make prayers, they receive the sacrament, but they are no more acceptable unto God than if they did them not at all. God saith unto them, as a father to his child, and a master to his servant, seeing them scrambling over their duties and business without care and respect, I had as lief you did them not at all. Now what would we think of him that should never pray, never hear the word, never receive the sacrament; would not every one think he is an odious man to God? Verily such, and more odious, if it may be, is every one that doth these, but without care, of course, without conscience; they hear the word, but without profit. God had rather have them away, than come to church to deride his word, to sleep or talk, there to profane his worship. So they pray, but not with their hearts, but with their lips; their hearts are taken away with their pleasures, profits, and delights. As Hosea iv. 11, he esteems of them as well when they pray not; they receive the sacrament, but without preparation, without understanding what they do; most unworthily they intrude themselves to the table of the Lord. God had as lief have them away; their room were as acceptable to him as their thronging, as his without the wedding-garment at the feast of the king, Matt. xxii.

This is their fearful condition: he that hears is as though he heard not, he that prays as though he prayed not, he that receiveth the sacrament as though he did not; and so of all the service of God; he is as acceptable to God in not doing them as he is in doing, and *è contra*, as odious.

*Obj.* Then a man had as good not do at all? and so, while you reprove one thing, you open the gap to another, from carelessness to profaneness.

*Ans.* If any man do gather so, it is his collection, not my assertion. He, like a spider or toad, gathereth venom and poison from sweet flowers and wholesome herbs. If a master should tell his servant doing his business negligently that he had as lief he did it not, will he reply then he will not? If he do, shall he not for such contempt be beaten with more stripes? Nay, a servant that would avoid that, and receive any wages and reward, will seek to correct his error and reform his corruption; so in this.

*Use* 3. This ought to instruct us that have any desire to be accepted in our service of God, and not to be rejected, as if we did neglect it altogether, to do it with all care and diligence, and in the best manner that may be. Do we must. And then not to lose our labour, and have no respect nor reward, we must endeavour to do them as they ought to be done: hear with an honest heart, to profit; pray with a fervent spirit, to prevail; use the sacraments in knowledge and due preparation for them; these and all other parts of his service as he requireth, else we are in a strait, as the lepers were, 2 Kings vii. 3, 4, without the walls of Samaria. If they enter the city, there is death; if they sit still, there is death also; so we, if we do not, we displease; if we do, and not as we ought, we displease also. They had a third way, to go out to the enemies, wherein their difficulty was the greatest; but we have a third, wherein our comfort is the most, to do them as he requireth of us.

*Obj.* But some will object, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' And this is but a cold comfort in a thing that nobody can do, and therefore we were as good to do nothing at all, for who can do things as he requireth?

*Ans.* I answer, we have a merciful God to deal with, who in Jesus Christ accepteth our affections for actions, our beginnings for perfections, 2 Cor. viii. 12; and upon this ground we must do our endeavours to do it in the perfectest manner that we may, that we may be accepted, and not abstain. It is a rule indeed in matters indifferent, which are left to our choice, to refrain from them, because our weakness will bring forth some sin in the doing of them; as in exercises and recreations, when they cause us to swear, curse, fret, and lose our time. But in other things for which there is a commandment, and our own experience teacheth that we cannot do them without defects and infirmities (as we cannot hear the word with that faith we ought, but wandering thoughts, and sometime envious, covetous, ambitious desires creep into our hearts), yet must we do, and not abstain; our imperfections hinder them from being perfectly good, but not from being accepted, while we condemn our imperfections, and desire to do better. And as the high priest, Exod. xxviii. 38, did bear the iniquity of the holy things, so, though our holiest offerings and works of righteousness have defects and wants, blemishes and stains of our corruptions, our high priest Christ Jesus will acquit us of them, and procure us favour and acceptation in the sight of God.

*I have no pleasure in you.* The reason of his wish why he could desire they rather should not do him service than do it; and this carrieth the contrary, I dislike you, I am angry and displeased with you, remaining in your sins and corruptions.

*Doct.* The Lord hath no pleasure in ungodly men, such as commit and continue in sin and transgression of his law, but he is angry and displeased with them; so is it here: Ps. v. 4, 'For thou art a God that lovest not wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee;' and Heb. x. 38, 2 Sam. xv. 26; hence it is that he is compared to a consuming fire, even to his own, Deut. iv. 24. Therefore to shew his anger towards those who should transgress, how great it is; when he gave the law, he descended with fire, and the whole mountain burned about him.

*Reason* 1. Because the Lord hates iniquity, Ps.

xlv. 7. Now, then, as men who hate any liquor do dislike the vessel that it is in for it, yea, sometimes grow to hate and abhor it; so the Lord hating sin, dislikes the sinner, yea, sometimes grows to hate him, Ps. v. 5; not the nature he made, not the man, but the wicked man, because sin cleaves so fast to him as they cannot be parted; as when the scent will not out of the vessel, he hates both. As Saint Augustine saith, God hates iniquity; therefore in some he destroys it by damnation, as in reprobates; in others, he takes it away by justification, as in the elect.*

*Reason* 2. Because as every one delights and takes pleasure in his like, which makes the angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; and men rejoice and account it a glorious thing to have children like themselves, and take the more pleasure in them when the succession is like to prove like; so God, in those that are most like him; because, saith Cyprian, then the divine gentry, by their actions and practices, may become more famous; then must he be displeased with these, because they grow more unlike him, and like to Satan his enemy.

*Use* 1. Anger then simply in itself is not a sin, but as it is mixed with other perturbations and vices, seeing God is angry; as Christ was often, and very vehemently, John ii. 13, 14, 17; and whensoever he corrected and reproved sin, he shewed himself in his words very angry, Matt. xxiii. 13; so hath Moses, the prophets, apostles, and all the saints. Therefore Lactantius saith, *sine irâ peccata corrigi non posse*, sin cannot be corrected without anger; for the sight of sin is so horrible in itself, that he that is a good man cannot but be offended, moved and angry with the sight of it. And he that is not moved at it, either allows it, or doth not much detest it, or is willing to avoid trouble in correcting of it; hence the repressing of anger is a sin, being a great sin not to repress, and that irefully, the sins which are under our charge, as old Eli; for God hath given anger to the spirit of man, as an edge to a weapon, that when it is needful we may use it, saith Saint Chrysostom.† This, then, we ought to do, imitate these examples, and be angry with sins, and correct them to our power: but, Eph. iv. 26, this place doth not simply forbid anger, but corrupt anger, by which we offend God. Now anger is vicious and corrupt, first, if a man be angry rashly for no cause, or for small cause, Matt. v. 22; secondly, if a man be angry for private injuries, not for them as they are sins offensive to God, but injuries to himself; thirdly, when the anger that should be against the sin is against the person, and turned to his brother; and this is that there forbidden, and it is thus understood: be angry, but not without just cause; be angry not for private injuries, but vices, as they are against the law of God; finally, be angry not with your brethren, but with their corruptions, and this is hence warrantable.

*Use* 2. Seeing God will be angry with all, both elect and reprobate, for their sins, and most displeased with them, this should persuade us not to be secure, but to pass our lives in the fear of the anger of God. To this one thing bend we all our endeavours and powers, that we sin not, and so provoke the anger and displeasure of God, for of this we may be sure that God's word shall be fulfilled: Ps. lxxxix. 31, 32, 'If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with strokes.' Wrath and displeasure follows the sinner, as the shadow the body. But if God spare, and be not angry, that is, shew it not, *Magna est ira non irasci*,* it is a sign of greater displeasure. The master that respects his servant corrects him for a small fault; if he let him alone, it may be thought he doth it till great faults be joined to it, and he may either punish more, or cast him out of his house; so in this.

*Neither will I accept an offering at your hand.* Because he is displeased with them, therefore he will not accept their offerings, nor their service and prayers.

*Doct.* The person of a man must first please God, before his prayers, his offerings, or any other work that he doth, can be pleasing or acceptable to him; that is, before reconciliation and justification, they are unaccepted. It is hence manifest, because he rejecteth their offerings, being displeased with their persons. Hereto belongs that, Gen. iv. 4, and that Prov. xv. 8, 'The sacrifice of the wicked is abominato the Lord: but the prayer of the righteous is acceptable unto him.' Hence Isaiah i. 13, 19, 1 Peter ii. 5, 'And ye, as lively stones, he made a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus.' Heb. xiii. 6.

*Reason* 1. Because all works are made acceptable to God by faith, as all things are made pleasing to men by the light; so Chrysostom; and without it nothing is, Heb. xi. 6. Now faith is that which makes the person accepted, for by it we are justified, Rom. v. 1, and made the sons of God. Rom. iii. 26.

*Reason* 2. Because before they are strangers, Eph. ii. 19, yea and enemies, Rom. v. 10; now things done by strangers are not greatly grateful, but by enemies they altogether distaste us.

*Use* 1. This confuteth the papists, who made good works the cause of our justification and reconciliation to God, whenas they cannot be good, so they cannot be acceptable, before we be reconciled and acceptable in his sight. How do they then justify us and reconcile us? for that which must justify and reconcile

* Deus odit iniquitatem, itaque in aliis eam perimit per damnationem, ut in reprobis; in aliis adimit per justificationem, ut in electis.—*August. ad Simplicianum*, lib. vii. quæst. 2, Col. 630, tom. 4.

† Quasi gladio aciem, sic menti nostræ iræ acumen imposuit, ut eo cum oportet utamur.—*Chry. hom.* 6, *de laudib. Paul.*

* Chrysostom in Mat. hom 17.

another, must needs itself be in favour; for as that is true of St Augustine, *Opera non præcedunt justificandum, sed sequuntur justificatum*, so that is as true, whensoever they come they are not acceptable in themselves, because they are imperfect; our evil works are perfectly evil, and so deserve to be cast out of favour, but our good works are not perfectly good, and so cannot procure favour of themselves.

*Obj.* If any object, as some of our papists stick not to do, that we are justified by works, because by faith, for faith is a work;—

*Ans.* I answer, faith is not our work, but God's in us, John vi. 29. Again, though having received faith we do believe, yet it is not faith, or the work of it, that doth justify us, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ apprehended by faith; for as a hand that hath taken a treasure doth not enrich us, but the treasure; and it is not the mouth receiving the meat, but the meat that doth nourish us; so in this. And being thus justified then we work, and our works are acceptable, because we are first accepted in Christ.

*Use* 2. To stir up every man to the trial of his estate and himself, whether he be indeed reconciled to God or no, whether justified or no, that if he be not, he may labour and endeavour to be; because while he is in that condition, whatsoever things he do, as they are but *splendida peccata* (Augustine), so they are altogether unacceptable to God, whether he hear, or give, or receive, or pay; a heavy condition of a servant, that do what he can, yet he cannot please.

*Quest.* But haply thou art desirous to know whether thou art reconciled or no; and if not, how to come by it.

*Ans.* I answer thee, if thou hast true faith, then shall this be like the salt, 2 Kings ii. 21, which healed the spring of waters; and of it may be said as there.

*Use* 3. This comforts God's children, who are justified in Jesus Christ, and so accepted in his sight; their works, their sacrifice, and worship liketh him, howsoever they are done in imperfections, and in many great weaknesses, and are not so fully with their whole soul, mind, and heart, as they should be, but carry the touch of man's corruption, and are not able to abide the strict and straight judgment of God; yet because they proceed from them who are accepted in Christ, they please him, and the imperfections are pardoned in Christ, and they taken for pure and holy, Prov. xv. 8, 1 Peter ii. 5; as a little thing done of a child is more acceptable, than much done by a servant.

Ver. 11. *For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.*

*From the rising of the sun.* Here is the second part of withdrawing God's mercy from these Jews. And this is the removing of his worship and word from Jews to Gentiles, set down by a comparison of dissimilitude betwixt Jews and Gentiles. The proposition of the Gentiles, and their great care and respect of his worship, ver. 11; the reddition of the Jews, and their corruption and carelessness of his worship, renewing the former expostulation, vers. 12, 13. In this we are to consider the worship of God, and the circumstances of it. In it we consider, 1, the ground of it, 'my name is great,' repeated in the beginning and ending of the verse for more certainty of the thing; 2, the matter, 'incense and oblation;' 3, the manner and quality of it, 'pure,' opposite to the Jews' profane and polluted service of God. The circumstances: 1, persons, 'Gentiles;' 2, place, 'everywhere.'

Now for the meaning. The papists have wrested this place, to establish the doctrine of their mass, but how absurdly, shall appear before we have ended with the verse; in the meantime we will search the true meaning of them as they lie in order.

*For from the rising of the sun.* These words express the place, some expound them in the time present, and these either take them absolutely thus: the Gentiles, though they have no knowledge of God but by nature, as much as they may learn out of the great books, the heavens and the earth, and the revolutions and changes of them, by the rising of the sun, and the going down of the same, yet they offer unto God oblations in their kind; thus Montanus. But this cannot be, because of the quality of the sacrifice following; for it is said to be pure, which could not come from them in that dim light they had. Or conditionally, that the Gentiles would offer a pure sacrifice, if God did reveal himself to them as he hath to the Jews. But the words are so absolutely spoken, they cannot thus be taken.

Others, with more general consent on all sides, take them in the future tense, or time to come; that the time should come when the Lord should translate his worship from the Jews to the Gentiles, and then should they bring holy offerings. And this is after the coming of Christ, who should take away the ceremonies, and abrogate the form of the Jewish worship, and bring in pure and spiritual sacrifices.

Now by this is noted the place, that is, through all the whole world: Ps. cxiii. 3, 'The Lord's name is praised from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same.' Not that it should be at one time in all places of the world, for that never was, nor shall be; but, as among the Jews, so in the whole world, before Christ's coming, the greater part of them were wicked idolaters and profane men, Isaiah xvii. 6 and vi. 13; but successively, now in one place, now in another, it shall be spoken and preached in all the parts of the world before Christ's second coming; Mat. xxvi. 13, Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession.'

*My name shall be great.* Here is the ground of God's worship. The name of God, signifying diverse things, in this place, may be taken either for himself, as a man's name is put for his person, Acts ii. 21, or for his excellency, majesty, and glory, as name for fame, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, Philip. ii. 9, Gen. xi. 4.

*Is great.* Not that God is great or less, *magnum et parvum sunt ex iis quæ ad aliquid* (Aristotle), but shewed, or declared, or acknowledged to be great, as the word *sanctified* is used, Mat. vi. 9, and the word *justified*, Mat. xi. 19, James ii. 21.

*Among the Gentiles.* The persons, by condition Gentiles, or nations, taken sometimes generally for a company of people consisting of many families gathered together, Isa. i. 4, John xi. 52. Secondly, more particularly for all people besides the Jews, all infidels, God's people being taken from among them only, Isa. xlix. 6. And so it is amongst those who were not God's people before, amongst them whom the Jews accounted fools, and did extremely hate; spoken, as it were, to provoke them to make more care of the worship of God, according to the denouncing, Deut. xxxii. 21.

*And in every place incense shall be offered unto me.* The matter of this offering or worship is first said to be incense, by which is understood prayer, invocation and thanksgiving, as Ps. cxli. 2, 'Let my prayer be directed in thy sight, as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.' Rev. v. 8.

Secondly, It is said to be an oblation or offering, by which is not understood the Levitical offering abrogated by Christ, neither the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, which none can offer but he, and which only was to be performed and offered upon the cross before the gate of Jerusalem; nor the sacrifice of the mass, as shall after appear. But by this is understood a man's self: every faithful man with all that he hath; for every one of God's ought both to consecrate himself to the spiritual worship of God, and as it were, sacrifice himself, and also offer up the sacrifice of prayer and praise, and of repenting, justice, alms, and other things pleasing to God, Rom. xiii. 1, 1 Peter ii. 5, Heb. xiii. 15, 16, Ps. iv. 6, and v. 19. And of this Irenæus, Tertullian and divers other understand this place.

*Pure.* Not simply without spot, Isa. lxiv. 6, but as the church is called holy and without spot, Cant. vi. 9: first, in regard the person offering it is in Christ, and as his person hath his obedience and righteousness applied and imputed to it, so his obedience hath Christ to cover the wants of it, Heb. xiii. 15, 1 Peter ii. 5.

Secondly, In regard of inward sanctification, the ground of it, the party being regenerate by the work of his spirit; and so every action in him, part holy and good, and well-pleasing to God, as coming and proceeding from his spirit, though having a taste and scent of our infirmities, as water passing by a pipe or channel, Rom. viii. 26, and xv. 16, Acts xv. 9.

This, though a threatening, yet is according to that, Deut. xxxii. 21, and so a kind of provocation to the Israelites, provoking them from the example of the Gentiles, with a holy emulation in piety and the worship of God. The Jews embraced not sincerely the worship of God, but putting it as it were from them, the Gentiles received it.

*Doct.* When one church maketh not account of the truth and worship of God, or doth reject it, another shall embrace it.

*From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same.* The Lord, though he had shewed much mercy and goodness upon the Jews, he is not emptied by it, but hath the like in store for others, the Gentiles.

*Doct.* The Lord is marvellous rich in mercy, and liberal in giving his goodness to the sons of men, neither weary in giving, nor ever wasted with giving; manifest from this example, and James i. 5, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and reproacheth no man, and it shall be given him:' Rom. x. 12, 'For there is no difference between the Jew and the Grecian; for he that is Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him:' he gives, at all times, Luke xxii. 12; his ability is great, Eph. iii. 20; the effects prove it, giving more than they ask; to Abraham, for one son desired, he gave a seed as the stars in the heavens. To Isaac, Gen. xxv. 21, 22; to Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 11; to Solomon, Kings iii. 11. *Uberior est gloria, quam precatio* (Ambrose, *in loc.*).

*Reason* 1. Because he is Creator, and Lord of all, and by creation they are his sons, he their father; therefore, as a father he will provide for all his their portions, as Abraham did, Gen. xxv. 6; yea, and such is his care, that he cannot endure their want. Now they are in themselves continually wanting. Though he give one thing, they have need of another; as a ship and a net that must still be mending.

*Reason* 2. Because it is agreeable to his magnificency and greatness to deal thus liberally, as it is agreeable and becometh a prince to deal according to his magnificence and greatness.

*Reason* 3. Because it might be manifest the things they receive come to them not for their deserts, or the merit of their prayers, or any things else, but of his love and mercy, when he dealeth so bountifully.

*Use* 1. Prayers are not meritorious, James i. 5.

*Use* 2. If any want, he himself is cause of it. *Ibidem*, 'to all men.'

*Use* 3. An encouragement to ask.

*Use* 4. To learn to be liberal and not weary of well-doing, Gal. vi. 9, 10.

From sun rising to the sun setting, in all places and nations, is the worship and word of God propagated.

*Doct.* The church, under the times of the gospel, and since Christ, is not as it hath been, limited to one nation, as to the Jews, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, John iv. 22; but those limits are plucked up, and it is enlarged to

all the Gentiles, not one or two nations of them, but to all the world.

*Use.* This overthroweth the church of Rome, who limit the church which is enlarged by God, affirming that to be only the catholic church which is at Rome, or which is subject to the Romish tyrant. How then is it to all nations, are all subject to it? How catholic, when it is but a particular church? What is catholic but universal?* Now to speak thus, the *Roman Catholic* church, is to say, the *particular universal* church, which in any reasonable man's ear is most absurd.

*Obj.* But sometimes particular churches were called catholics.

*Ans.* So they were; but then as Augustine, Cont. Epist. Fundani. cap. iv. Every church did it, and no one church assumed this prerogative unto itself more than another; neither was catholic opposed to particular, but to heretical. The catholic faith was accounted the true faith, and the catholic faith opposed to heresy, and the catholic church to heretical churches: and in this kind the Church of Rome can least challenge it to itself, for it is least catholic, being in many things heretical.

The Jews corrupting and contemning the worship of God, the Gentiles are called; through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles.

*Doct.* God, by the sins of man, takes occasion to work good to others, and to magnify his mercy and goodness; so here, by the sins of the Jews, he bringeth good to the Gentiles, and glory to his own name.

*Reason* 1. Because he may take from the wicked any just occasion of accusing his providence and government, because he suffers sin to be, that could prevent it, which, indeed, is a sin in him that doth it not, who is bound to it; but it is not so with God. The physician is not to be accused when he maketh his patient sick, to bring him to health; less here God, not making him sin, but letting him alone to his own corruptions.

*Reason* 2. Because he is most wise, good, and powerful, and would so manifest himself, by bringing light out of darkness, good out of evil; for to make good, or to work good by good, would nothing so manifest this. To make some excellent work of pure gold is no great thing; a slender artizan and a small skill will do it; but of base lead to make pure gold is admirable alchymy: so to bring good out of good is *humanum*, but good out of evil *divinum*.

*Obj.* Why, then, should any be punished for sin, or why should not men sin, that the goodness of God may be more magnified?

*Sol.* Such two objections were made to St Paul, Rom. iii. 5–8, where also his answer is to the first, ver. 5. This is most absurd, for then should God judge unjustly, which no man may suppose, that he which is the judge of all the world should be unjust, and addeth, *absit*, which he useth often when he speaketh of things, which should not once be thought, and which the mind of a holy man ought to abhor once to think of. To the second he answereth, ver. 8, 'whose damnation is just,' shewing that such an error is so far differing from his doctrine that he condemns both it and the teachers and suggesters of it; for good is not an effect of the evil, that it of itself brings forth any such thing, but that comes by the wisdom, power and goodness of God. He hath given man a law that he must follow, and not do other things upon expectation of effects; for a man may be condemned for the evil, whatsoever effect it brings forth by the goodness of God, as Judas. And if any man thus reason, it is as if he that had been sick of some desperate disease, which, when he is cured, and the skill of a physician grown famous by it, he will again surfeit to fall into the like disease, that the physician might be more famous; or as if poor men and beggars should resolve still to be in need and to beg, because that might magnify the bounty and magnificence of the rich.

*Use* 1. When we see the hatred and malice of men to profit others by their persecutions in word or deed, so that they are made more zealous and careful, more upright and entire, there is no excuse for men, nor thanks to them to be given, but the glory is to be given to the Lord, who thus turns things and makes good out of evil. Persecutors unto the martyrs, saith St Augustine, are as the hammer is to gold, as the mill to wheat, as the oven to bread, as the furnace to metal, profit them, work them, and purge them; but no thank to them, it is not out of the nature of them, but from the skill of the goldsmith, the baker, &c.; for they would consume the gold with the dross, the wheat with the chaff, and bruise them in pieces, if he did not temper and moderate, and use them for the good of them. So it is in this Rom. viii. 28.

*Use* 2. We are in the latter days, wherein iniquity hath got the upper hand, and sin doth abound. It is matter of grief and trouble if we consider what they are, and what of themselves they bring: the wrath of God, his rod and plagues; yet are they or will be less troublesome when we consider that God can and will turn them to his own glory and the good of his church. To converse among venomous creatures, to have to do with rank poison, is fearful and troublesome, as they are simples and in themselves; but when they are once skilfully tempered by the art of the apothecary, when the physician's skill hath made a just and good composition of them, then, though it be not altogether toothsome, yet it is not so troublesome nor hurtful unto men. So in this.

*Use* 3. For imitation, to teach us to endeavour to make good out of evil, and by the sins of men, our own, or others', take occasion to glorify God the more, or to help and profit ourselves or others, by our own sins, or others under our charge; to be humbled both

* Catholic, saith Augustine, Epist. xlviii. *ex communione totius orbis.*

to repentance, as also to true humility and lowliness of mind, as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 21; in the sins of others, not to triumph over them, but to bless the mercy of God and magnify his goodness, that he keeps us from the like, who have no less in us the seed of them than they have, accounting ourselves as much beholden to God for keeping us from those sins as if we had committed them, and he had remitted or pardoned them to us; as Augustine.

*My name is great.* Here is the ground of all the worship of God which follows. Being smitten with a reverence and persuasion of his greatness and majesty, they worship and serve him.

*Doct.* The ground and foundation of all true and sincere worship of God is the persuasion and acknowledgment of his greatness, and the want of it cause of contempt of God and of his worship. What maketh men's persons admired and sought to but this? When they are accounted great, and men conceive so of them. This is manifest by that Ps. civ. 1–3, &c.; Jer. v. 22; Rom. xii. 1, conferred with chap. xi. 33–36, when Pharaoh would give no leave to the people of Israel to worship God nor fear his word himself. He said, 'Who is the Lord?' Exod. v. 2, Mat. vi.

*Reason.* Because greatness draws honour and reverence of itself. The heathen allege why they worship the host of heaven, because God hath given them such majesty and beauty. Chrysostom tells them it was their corruption that they went not higher to see God's greatness.

*Use* 1. This discovers unto us a notable and devilish policy of Satan, when he would breed contempt of God and his worship, then brought he in images and image-making into the church, that under the shapes and forms of base creatures he might wipe out of the minds of men the greatness and infiniteness of God, and impress in them some base conceit of him, that their hearts might think but basely of his worship and service. It is a most easy thing to contemn God in an image, saith one. *Facillimum est, contemnere Deum in imagine.* They persuade men that it is to help devotion, as Jeroboam would make the worship of God easy unto the people, by setting up two calves in Dan and Bethel, 1 Kings xxii., but as he made it to be abhorred, so these make God's worship not to be regarded, and men more cold in it.

*Use* 2. This may teach us the reason of so much corruption in the worship and service of God, want of knowledge and persuasion of the greatness and infiniteness of God. Hence are additions and detractions from it, for if they were persuaded he were infinitely wise, and only wise, who needed no counsellor nor adviser what is fit for his service and worship, then would they never have so many inventions and traditions of their own, on which they doat, more than they love that he hath commanded, as men doat more on their own children than they affect others. From this it is that they either omit or contemn his worship and the parts of it, or they perform them only of course, for fashion, and *pro forma tantùm*; hence they prefer man before him, seeking rather to please man, fearing rather to offend man, as if he had more rewards or punishments than God to confer or inflict.

*Use* 3. To teach us, to the end we may worship him aright, to labour to be instructed and to know his greatness, and be persuaded of his infiniteness in wisdom and knowledge, and power, justice, mercy, bounty, and such like. And this is to be had by looking into his works, by studying his word, and by obtaining his Spirit.

*Among the Gentiles.* They who were not his people, nor beloved, neither had anything that could deserve love, but rather hatred, are chosen and called of God.

*Doct.* The election and calling of God, whether of a few or many, whether a nation or particular men, it is free, and without desert, of mercy without merit.

*And in every place.* Here is the place where the service of God is to be performed, and spiritual sacrifice to be offered unto him; not upon the altar, or in the temple, but everywhere, all places being indifferent, circumstances regarded.

*Doct.* The Gentiles and church after Christ, under the gospel, are not tied for the worship of God, for prayer and invocation, and such like, to the temple and synagogues, or in private worship to look towards the temple, where there were visible signs of God's special presence. Now they may pray everywhere, and worship God in every place, John iv. 21, 23, 1 Tim. ii. 8, only this generally hath this restraint; prayers and worship may be performed in all places, but not all kind in all places; public prayers in public places, and private in private. For the first it is manifest, 1 Cor. xi. 18. Church is there taken for a public place, because of the opposition, ver. 22; which thing is apparent through all established churches that have been or are, as the histories of all times shew they had open places and meetings for their assemblies and service of God, except in time of persecution. For the second, see Mat. vi. 5, 6, prayer in the closet. So Gen. xxiv. 63, prayer in the field; Mat. xiv. 23, prayer in a mountain apart.

*Reason* 1. Because then the ark of God's presence and his mercy-seat was in the temple, but now all such ceremonies are removed; the substance being come, the shadows are gone. And now is he everywhere with his presence where he is sought for, as he then was, but had limited them to that place to seek him.

*Reason* 2. Because every one hath a temple about with him wheresoever he is, 1 Cor. vi. 19. *Quest.* Had not they so? *Ans.* Yes; but God had limited them.

*Reason* 3. Because the public place is most fit for public, both for order and comeliness, and private for private, because a man may more freely confess and mourn for his sins, and he may be more fit, being

freed from the occurrences of eye and ear, by which the frail heart of man and his mind is drawn away.

*Use* 1. To shew the error of those who think a public place better for their prayers than private, when indeed the church is as private as any other, when a man is alone; and then a public place is more excellent for the worship of God, when the congregation is assembled for that purpose. When they are together, a man hath more helps, more incitations and provocations, being more affected, one kindling another, as two burning coals or billets, their prayers more forcible and effectual; otherwise when they are severed, one place is as holy as another, a man's closet and chamber fitter by much than any other, for the reasons before. And a superstitious opinion of the place will make a man's prayer more unacceptable, both because that affection crosseth the flat assertion of God here and elsewhere, and again establisheth the ceremony, and denies the coming of Christ.

*Use* 2. A direction to every man to perform the worship of God everywhere; to lift up pure hands unto God in all places, performing public worship in public places, and accustomed times, serving God as is said of Anna: Luke ii. 37, 'She was a widow about four score and four years, and went not out of the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day;' which was *sine omissione, non sine intermissione*, saith Beda; and private service in their private places; as God bestows private blessings privately upon men, as remission of sins, and requires no witness. Is it not absurd, whereas God confers benefits on us, he is content to do it privately, yet we will never worship God but before witnesses, and for ostentation's sake? saith Chrysostom.* Hezekiah turned himself to the wall and prayed.

*Use* 3. A comfort for all those who by any occasion may be excluded from the public assemblies and places of God's worship, whether unjustly excommunicated or cast out of the church, as he was that was cast out, John ix., or otherwise hindered by the violence of man or the hand of God; yet wheresoever he be, in every place may he worship God, and God will respect and accept that worship from him. He that found out the once blind, now seeing, man, though cast out, will be found when he is sought, though out of the temple and church; he that was found of Hezekiah in his bed, of Paul and Silas in the prison, of Jonah in the whale's belly, of Paul upon the sea, and in every place where they held up pure hands unto him: he is the same still, and will be found of them that seek him aright, every where. Princes have their times and places out of which, if they be taken and petitions put up, they that do so offend, and for favour carry displeasure. Sometime they are like to Ahasuerus, Esther iv. 11; sometime as Darius, Dan. vi. 7, 8; but God is ever ready to hear.

*Incense shall be offered, and a pure offering.* The matter of this worship.

The papists affirm, that by this can be understood nothing else but the most holy sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, offered in every place in the sacrifice of the mass. We understand it of spiritual sacrifices, not real. Whether is most probable we must inquire.

*Obj.* 1. They, to overthrow ours and to establish their own, say, the word used for offering, *mincha*, signifies an external sacrifice, which was made of oil and incense, and so no spiritual sacrifice.*

*Ans.* 1. To this I answer, that then it cannot be the sacrifice of the mass, which consisteth not of any such things, but of the forms of bread and wine.

*Ans.* 2. Again, it is false which they say, for it is used for spiritual sacrifice, Ps. cxli. 2.

*Obj.* 2. But, secondly, spiritual sacrifices were amongst the Jews, and he speaketh of a sacrifice which was not amongst them; therefore it must be understood of the mass, for he speaketh of a new sacrifice.

*Ans.* It is answered: Here is never a word of a new sacrifice, but of a pure one. Not making the opposition betwixt new and old, as if they in the Old Testament had never used these sacrifices spoken of, but that they did not so frequently, neither relied upon them so much as upon their external outward sacrifices. But the opposition is betwixt the Levitical sacrifices which were offered in one only place, and for which God was offended that they were so corruptly offered, and the clean sacrifices among the Gentiles.

*Obj.* Thirdly, It is called a pure sacrifice. Now that cannot be of spiritual sacrifices, when ye say all the works of the godly are imperfect and impure as a menstruous cloth, and only the sacrifice of the mass is pure.

*Ans.* To this is answered: That the worship of God, performed according to his word and will, in itself is pure; and though there be many infirmities and spots in the faithful, and in their manner of offering of them, yet, because they offer up spiritual sacrifice by Jesus Christ, who by his blood hath purged his church, that he might make it without spot, and so their sacrifices, they are pure, Heb. xiii. 15, 1 Pet. ii. 5. And as for their mass, it is most impure; and to have it pure, they require the devout and religious intention of the priest, which, being wanting, makes it impure.

But that this cannot be understood of the mass, and the sacrifice in it, is thus proved: We would de-

* Quomodo non absurdum, ut in quibus nos ipse beneficio afficit, solo testimonio nostri contentus sit: nos autem in quibus ipsum colimus, alios testus quæramus, et ad ostentationem quicquam faciamus.—*Chrysostom hom.* 21, *ad populum Antioch.*

* Bellarm.

mand of them, whether they take these words properly or figuratively. If properly, then this place must needs be understood of legal worship, and so doth not pertain to the New Testament; yea, then, must they offer incense in the mass as well as bread. If figuratively, then is the mass a metaphorical and figurative sacrifice, and not a true, real, and outward sacrifice, as they say it is? But if they will take the first metaphorically, and the latter properly, besides the monstrous absurdity of it, see what follows. The word signifies a sacrifice made of flour, oil and incense, a breaden sacrifice, Lev. ii. 1. Then overthrow they their transubstantiation; for if they offer bread, it is not his body. Finally, that this cannot be understood of the sacrifice of the mass, is apparent from circumstance of place and person; for this may be offered everywhere, that not, but upon an altar only; this by all the Gentiles, that by priests only.

By this, then, we understand only spiritual sacrifices of the New Testament, as it is usual with the prophets to set them out by the names of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, that they might more familiarly shew to them of this age, that the Gentiles are called to the true religion.

*Incense shall be offered.* He sheweth that the Gentiles, called and converted unto God, will worship him.

*Doct.* Those who are effectually called and truly converted unto God, must and will worship him, be careful and zealous of his worship and service. Isa. xxvii. 13, 'In that day also shall the great trump be blown, and they shall come, which perished in the land of Ashur; and they that were chased into the land of Egypt: and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem;' Isa. ii. 3, 1 Pet. ii. 9; see it practised, 2 Kings v. 17, 'Moreover Naaman said, Shall there not be given to thy servant two mules' load of this earth? For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-sacrifice nor offering unto any other god, save unto the Lord.' Acts xii. 41, 42.

*Reason.* Because this is the end of their calling and conversion, Luke i. 73. Now everything tends to his proper end, and is carried to it by nature, as a stone is to his centre, and fire to his sphere.

*Use* 1. Hence we may gather why so many, and the most, are so little careful for the service and worship of God, being either neglecters or contemners of it. They are men uncalled, unconverted; called they are by the sound of the word, Mat. xxii., but not effectually called and converted; and therefore no marvel if they worship him not, neither be careful for his service, when they are forward enough for duties to men; yea, and by this may we judge them not to be called, when everything else hath his time, and they are careful and diligent about the duties of civil honesty, and the works of their worldly callings, and can find no time for the service of God and his worship, and think every hour or minute too much that is spent in offering up incense to the Lord. Their calling in the week-day will not afford them time to pray unto God, unless it be to mumble a few prayers when they are washing their hands, as papists or other like, or putting on their apparel. But upon the Lord's day, the service of God must permit them unnecessarily to do things that might have been before, or may be done after, or have no necessity to be done at all. All the persuading a man can use, yet shall he not prevail in a week to persuade them to spend some hours in reading and praying, in keeping the books of their conscience in good order, whenas upon the Lord's day no persuasion needeth to make them keep at home and be busy in their account of the world. Ever against the service of God they object their calling, their children, their wives, profits, pleasures, and such like, but never the service of God against them. Do they not shew they are uncalled, unconverted.

*Use* 2. To instruct as many as are called and converted, how careful they ought to be of the worship and service of God, yea, to shew and seal up their calling by this. Peter's wife's mother delivered from her fever, presently administered unto Christ. When Elijah did but cast his mantle over Elisha, 1 Kings xix. 19, 20, he ran after him to serve him. They must then remember God's end, and not defeat him of it. They must remember what they were, and see his mercy, what they are, and acknowledge his bounty, who hath of bond slaves made them free, of servants sons. If he had but delivered them, all a man could do were little enough; more, that he hath thus advanced them, Therefore must they do him the more honour, and be more zealous of his service and worship; and if they be upbraided for it, they must answer as David did, 2 Sam. iv. 21, 22, 'Then David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me rather than thy father and all his house, and commanded me to be ruler over the people of the Lord, even over Israel. And therefore will I play before the Lord, and will yet be more vile than thus, and will be low in mine own sight, and of the very same maidservants, which thou hast spoken of, shall I be had in honour.'

*Incense and an offering.* By the real and outward sacrifice of the Jews, he understandeth the spiritual sacrifice of the Gentiles and church under Christ.

*Doct.* Under the gospel, Christians are freed from all outward and real sacrifices to be offered immediately to God, and of them are only required spiritual sacrifices, as their souls and bodies, their prayers and praises, their repentance and alms, Rom xii. 1, Heb. xiii. 15, 16, 1 Peter ii. 5, Philip. iv. 18, John iv. 23.

*Reason* 1. Because their priesthood is only spiritual, therefore is his sacrifice only spiritual. Such as the priest, such his sacrifice: 1 Peter ii. 5, 'And ye, as

lively stones, be made a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'

*Reason* 2. Because all those outward ceremonies were shadows and types, now the body and truth being come, they are abolished.

*Reason* 3. Because ceremonies and sacrifices were given the church for her infirmities, and only as a help to keep her from the corruptions of idolaters, till she had received the Spirit of God in a larger sort and measure. St Chrysostom compares the church to a wife, and God to a husband, and thus expresseth his purpose.* If a man have a wife wantonly disposed, he confines her to some certain places, to her chambers and private rooms, that she may not gad abroad at her pleasure, and appoints her eunuchs and chamber-maids diligently to attend to her, that her honesty may not be suspected; so God dealt with the Jews, Hosea ii. 19, that people was much inclined to adultery of false worship, therefore God shut them up from other nations, and made them dwell alone in Canaan, and kept guard upon them with rites and ceremonies, as so many pedagogues, that their faith to him might not be suspected; but now when God had given his Holy Spirit by Christ unto his church, he removed from her the custody of ceremonies.

*Obj.* Our bodies are real sacrifices, so are our alms.

*Sol.* The first is not outward, the second is not immediately offered to God. And the sacrifice is not the thing given, but the affection, as appears by the difference which Christ put betwixt the widow and the rich rulers, in their offering to the treasury.

*Use* 1. Then are there now no external real priests, such as were under the law, because no external real sacrifice; he who took away the sacrifice, took away the sacrificer. And as he was the end of the law, that is, of the moral law, because he was the consummation and perfection of it, working and perfecting that the law could not, so was he the end of the ceremonial law, as death is the end of all living creatures, because by it they cease to be so; so Christ their period, for by him they are abolished. And if they, then the priesthood, he being the last external and real priest; for otherwise the word ἱερεῖς is never used in the New Testament, but either to Christ in respect of his propitiatory sacrifice, or to all true Christians in respect of their spiritual sacrifices, and never applied to any ecclesiastical order or function of men, as we commonly take the word, for a sacrificer; but as by the etymology of it, it signifies an elder, a presbyter, or priest.

*Use* 2. To meet with a generation that lives upon the earth, who, being careless of God, his worship and service, as he hath prescribed and commanded the same, do pretend that if he would require such sacrifices as were in use under the law, they would be at any cost with the Lord, like those hypocrites, Mic. vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, and with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? shall I give my first born for my transgression, even the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' when they could not endure what is told them. Verse 8, 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee? surely to do justly, and to love mercy, and to humble thyself to walk with thy God.' Anything but that they should do they pretend to be willing to do, like children, who like any manner of education but that their parents would bring them up in; if in a trade, oh if they might follow their book, anything but that they should, and their parents would have. So with these; they know not, or will not know their own heart, which is naturally irreligious, and never will like that is commanded, but would go a-whoring with their own imaginations; and ever will like that they may not have, or will not be accepted, when they contemn that they have; and not respecting these, they cannot but contemn that is otherwise enjoined, as Luke xvi. 30, 31, he said, 'Nay, father Abraham, but if one come unto them from the dead,' they will amend their lives. Then he said unto him, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rise from the dead again.' They are like to a woman, to whom one making love, and desiring her person, she disliking his, answers him she will give him anything but herself, her riches, jewels, bracelets, and such like, only to put him off, because she sees he desires her person only; and the other, if he would desire, she would soon deny him.

*Use* 3. To teach us how we ought now with all diligence and frequency perform these, and offer these sacrifices more than they. These were common to us and them; they were burdened with others, of which we are eased, which were chargeable and toilsome, Acts xv. 10. As, 2 Kings v. 13, it was with Naaman; his servants came and spake unto him, and said, 'Father, if the prophet had commanded thee a great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?' So say I. If he had laid that burden also upon us, ought we not to have done both? how much more when he hath eased our shoulders? And if we

* Si quis uxorem habet propensam ad impudicitiam, eam certis locis concludit, cubiculis et conclavibus, ut ei non liceat vagari, pro arbitrio; addit præterea eunuchos, pedissequas et ancillas qui eam diligentissimè custodiant, ut fides ejus non amplius esset suspecta: ita Deus cum Judeis, Hosea ii. 19, verum ille populus admodum fuit infirmus ac debilis et ad adulteria idololatriæ ultra modum proclivis; Quare Deus eam separavit à cæteris nationibus, et in terra Canaan seorsim habitare voluit, à ceremoniis et ritibus undique ceu à pædagogis custodiri; ut fides ejus non esset amplius suspecta: ita ut maritus, sic Deus cum jam Spiritum sanctum per Christum ecclesiæ donavit, custodiam ceremoniarum ab eo removit.—*Chrysost.*

should not, how should we be justly condemned of unthankfulness? The wife that newly married had a wise and strait husband, knowing her frailty and infirmities, and therefore set a watch over her, and appointed servants to observe her, till her affection and faith were settled, when she ought and did honour, and obey, and love him; if he free her from them, and set her at liberty from that grievous bondage and tedious thing, will she then honour him the less? Questionless she ought not; but if she do, as the corruption of all is to wax worse by liberty, then is she condemned of unthankfulness the more. So it is with us.

*Incense.* The worship, prayers, and service of the Gentiles is resembled by this, not only familiarly to shew to them of that age, but to teach that their service, works, and worship is acceptable unto God, as such things are acceptable to the smell and senses of men; for in them God took no delight at all, neither could do, his nature being spiritual.

*Doct.* The works of God's children, their worship, service, and spiritual sacrifice, is delightful and acceptable to him, as sweet perfumes are to the smell of men.

*And a pure offering.* It is opposed to the Jews' sins, who offered unto God polluted and unperfect sacrifices, not such as they ought, and such as were according to the law; but now their offering shall be pure.

*Doct.* The works, actions, and worship of such as are truly called and converted are holy and pure. Thus prophesieth Malachi, that the Gentiles converted unto God, their works and worship of him shall be a pure offering. Thus St Paul speaks of the offering of the Romans, chap. xii. 1, that it is holy. Jude calls their faith most holy, ver. 20. There were a few in Sardis truly religious and converted; their garments were undefiled, Rev. iii. 4.

*Reason* 1. Because they are done according to his word, now they walk by that rule; things before they did at random, now they know his will, and after that they do. And it is a rule that worship performed according to the word, in themselves are good and pure, as the sacrifices which were according to the law were pure and clean for the matter of them.

*Reason* 2. Because the parties are holy; they are a holy priesthood, 1 Peter ii. 5. Now a good thing done in matter* by holy men, must needs be holy.

*Obj.* But how can they be holy when there is *eadem ratio totius et partis;* and the church for spots is compared to the moon? Cant. vi. 9.

*Ans.* This is answered, that he is so, because he is in Christ, and hath his righteousness imputed to him, both to his person and his obedience, 1 Cor. i. 30, *et non radiis solaribus, sed ipso sole amictus,* Rev. xii. 1, as the church is said to be clothed with the sun, Heb. xiii. 15, 1 Peter ii. 5.

*Reason* 3. Thirdly, because of his inward sanctification, the ground of it, the party being regenerated by the works of the Spirit, and so every action is in him part holy, and good, and well pleasing to God, as coming and proceeding from his Spirit, though having a tang and taste of his infirmities, as water passing through a pipe or channel, Rom. viii. 26 and xv. 16.

*Use* 1. This teacheth what to judge of the works and worship of all that are uncalled and unconverted; not only of heathen and infidels, but of unbelievers in the church. They must needs be impure and unholy, else were it nothing that is here affirmed of these after their calling. And indeed needs must it be, for, Titus i. 15, 'Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled.' So far is it that they should be *merita præparatoria,* as some papists speak of them; for unholy things cannot please him, less procure or deserve good things from him. Though they do the things for matter good, yet a good thing is oftentimes marred in the handling, and more when they are done by some men, and such men.

*Use* 2. Secondly, this proves that men's callings are free, without deserts, when the things that they do before, even their best, are impure and unholy, such as God shewed his great patience in that he did not confound them for them; and more the riches of his mercy, that for all them, yet he called them.

*Use* 3. This comforteth every one that is truly converted unto God. His works and worship is pure and holy, and so accepted of God, even then when he carrieth the body of sin about with him, Rom. vii. 21; when in himself he finds many infirmities; yea, and when his heart tells him that his best work is not without the taint of his corruption; yea, and when his heart may misdeem him; as Jacob's did, lest his father should discern him; so his corruptions. Yet then is he pure and holy, and so pleasing to God, because he is in Christ, and he and his obedience hath put on the fair robe of Christ's righteousness, which is not a scant garment, as Bernard saith, but one that reacheth to the heels, and covereth all the parts of the soul, as Jacob had Esau's garment; and as if he looked upon us in ourselves, he should see nothing pure, so in him all things appear as he is; yea, and because he is sanctified by the Spirit, those corruptions that often hinder and ever taint the best actions, God accounteth not theirs; nay, he saith they are not theirs, as long as there is a work of the Spirit in them striving against them, and grieving at the sight and sense of them. That which Bernard speaketh of envy, Thou feelest it, but agreest not to it; it is a passion in thee that God one day will heal, not such a sin as he will condemn thee for; so may we say of others, for they are not theirs; for, 1 John iii. 9, his regenerate part sinneth not, nay, it abhorreth that the body of sin hath done and worketh in him. Mark the words, saith Bernard; he doth not, but suffereth them unwillingly to be done in him, as that, Rom. vii. 17,

* Qu. 'in matter, done'?—ED.

'Now then it is no more I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me.' It is done indeed in me, but not of me, while I consent not to it.

*Use* 4. To teach every one that would have his offering pure and his service holy before God, to labour for true faith in Christ and the sanctification of his Spirit. By the first he shall put on Christ, by whom all his deformities shall be covered, all his sins and infirmities, as the deformities of the body are by a garment; by the second he shall resist and fight against the flesh, and be grieved at the sense of the evil in him, and so the regenerate part not consenting, but hating and striving against it, that bad dye and tincture which the best actions receive from the corruption of the flesh, God will not account his, nor impute to him, nor reject his service and work for it; but, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 'The good Lord will pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.'

Ver. 12. *But ye have polluted it, in that ye say, the table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat is not to be regarded.*

*But ye have polluted it.* This verse and the next is the second part of the comparison touching the Jews, and their great profaning and corrupting of his worship, which is set down first, generally, then in particular; and this, first, in thought, in this verse; secondly, in word; thirdly, in deed, ver. 13.

For the general, *but ye have polluted it.* Wherein first, the person; secondly the sin, *you*, with an emphasis; you whom I have chosen of all nations of the earth, whom I have beautified with so many benefits, and so strangely preserved, Deut. iv. 32–39, and many places of that nature. Again, you who profess yourselves in special manner to be my people, that you should thus use me, who ought rather otherwise to have honoured me, it is in you the more heinous, to me the more grievous and offensive.

*Polluted it*, or *my name.* Their sinful act, not that God's name is, or can be polluted by man's sins, more than the sun can be by a dunghill; but this is spoken, first, because they polluted those things which he had appointed to be highly reverenced, and set his mark or his name upon them, 1 Cor. x. 28, and xi. 27; secondly, because God did so esteem of it in his acceptation, Acts ix. 5, Mat. xxv. 40; thirdly, because they did as much as lay in them, in their endeavour nothing was wanting on their parts, Heb. vi. 6, and x. 29.

*In that ye say.* The first particular, their inward thought; ye thus say in your hearts, in your minds, you despise my name, my worship, and service. A base conceit of the worship of God; God's table, that is, his altar is polluted, is not greatly to be regarded, as the words following shew. Now they contemned God's altar, saith St Jerome, because it was plain and rude, not decked with gold and riches; and the offering, because it was burnt to ashes; Montanus, because it was served with fat and bread, things base and vile in themselves; Palutius, because the heathen had polluted it; but the former is more probable.

*And the fruit thereof.* By it understanding the offering that was laid upon the altar, which made St Jerome translate it, *quod super ponitur.* And of this offering, one part was for the priest, the Lord's minister, Lev. vi. 17; and this they thought was not to be regarded; having come not to regard the worship and service of God, they esteem not of his ministers.

In the person, the emphasis is double; first, that they upon whom he had bestowed so great things; secondly, they who made such show of his service, should contemn it.

*Doct.* It is nothing so great and grievous sin for men who have received small things and blessings from God to contemn his name, and be careless of his service and worship, as for those who have received great things from him, and upon whom he hath bestowed more excellent favours; and God takes it nothing so heinously from the one as from the other, manifest here, and Isa. i. 2, 'Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath said, I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me;' and v. 4, 'What could I have done any more to my vineyard, that I have not done unto it? why have I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it bringeth forth wild grapes?' 2 Sam. xii. 7, 8, Mat. xi. 23, 24.

*Reason.* Because the one hath less, the other more, causes why they should honour him and be careful of his worship; every benefit and favour deserves it, the least meriteth it, much more many and great ones; where then the most and the greatest are, there the contempt is the most heinous.

As the husbandman, the more labour and cost he bestows upon his ground, the greater harvest he expecteth; when for equal pains and cost, he looks for equal fruit; as Luke xiii. 7–9, 'Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, this three years have I come and sought fruit of this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why keepeth it also the ground barren? And he answered, and said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I dig round about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; if not, then shalt thou cut it down.'

*Use* 1. Then the contempt of God's worship and service that is in this city, is far more heinous and grievous than of any other place in the land besides, because God hath bestowed upon it more favour, and greater things than upon any other; more wealth, greater strength, more honour; for it is the wealth, and the strength, and the honour of the land; he hath crowned it with much honour and loving-kindness; he hath given it the gospel, the watering and planting of Paul and Apollos, more abundantly than any part of the

land besides; he hath freed it from the plague, he hath delivered it from the sword, which should have been first in the confusion if the enemy had had his wished-for day; however it flatter itself in the strength of it, the wealth of it would in that day have made it a prey. He hath done this, and many more that I cannot speak of, and yet the contempt of God's worship, name, and service, is in all, from the highest to the lowest. Like magistrates, like subjects; like minister, like people; like masters, like servants; parents and children, rich and poor, bond and free, all contemners of the worship and service of God, which is the more fearful and heinous sin, because of the riches of God's goodness, his bounty and blessings; and he takes it more heinously, that when he will visit the land with another judgment, the sword or any other, as it was the first in the plague, it shall be in the other; unless it repent, and grow more zealous for his service and worship.

*Use* 2. More particularly, there are many particular men in this city and elsewhere, who are careless of the worship of God, and do indeed pollute his name, and think it no fault in them, because they are above others in wealth, above them in worship or honour, exceed them in wit and learning. These are the men, if a survey be taken, who are less frequent in prayer and in hearing, most careless, both privately and publicly, of the worship and service of God; either not doing, or so doing, as, if they do anything, God is more beholden to them, than they bound to him; as if God's favour, and the fruits of his love, were faculties and dispensations to bear them out in dishonouring of him, and polluting his name. Nay, let them know it, if they do not; or, if they will not now, they one day shall to their cost, that their carelessness and contempt is more heinous than of others, and he so takes it. They shall find these contrary, the eyes of God and men; in men's eyes a little thing in them that is good, is great; a great evil, but a little; not so with God. And when every man shall give his account (as he shall one day), it shall be far easier for the unlearned than for the learned, for the base than honourable, for the poor than rich. The benefits of God, specially these general ones, are not always proofs of his love; but they are ever provocations of obedience and honour from men; that, if they answer it not, as they have received more here, so they shall have more hereafter. Why do they deceive themselves, or suffer themselves by flatterers to be deceived? We will make but them judges, and they will give sentence of themselves. What is that courtier worthy of that receives abundance of favour from the king, and requites him with contempt or treason? So of a father and his son, of a servant and his master, &c.; will they not take it more heinously, and shall not all their benefits and favours increase their faults? And are not God's ways just, more equal, and far above the ways of men. Then let me speak to you rich men, &c. I beseech you, be deceived no longer; you ought to be more religious, and more careful than others; I pray you correct your error, and begin to be more careful, lest you be forced to condemn yourselves when it will be too late.

You who profess yourselves in special manner mine, and specially profess my worship.

*Doct.* It is a far more grievous and heinous sin, for such as specially profess the worship and fear of God, to contemn his name, and not regard his worship, than for those who make none or very little show of it, and God takes it more heinously from them; so here, and Micah ii. 6, 7, Mark xiv. 37, 2 Peter ii. 21.

*Reason* 1. Because he doth it of knowledge, and goes against his knowledge; whereas the other, as is probable, doth not so; for his profession argues he knows what is to be done, and what ought to be done. Now sins against knowledge are more heinous, the other more excusable; as a man professing an art, a fault in this work of his art is more foul than in another man's work. Religion is the profession of God; and every religious man, in this that he takes up religion, professes that he knows the will of God, saith Salvian.*

*Reason* 2. Because it is here, as it were, out of his place, where the thing is lighter, and not so offensive; an element in his place not so heavy, a spot upon a foul garment not so uncomely; an element out of his place, a spot upon the purest garment, is the sin of professors.

*Reason* 3. Because these things come commonly unexpected; and that which is unexpected and unsuspected, it cometh more suddenly, it lighteth more heavily, and is taken more to heart. This made David complain so much of the injury of a friend, as a thing that came so unexpected, and did so pierce him.

*Use* 1. To instruct the minister, whose sins and contempt of God's worship he ought specially to dislike, to reprove, and lay load on. It is his part to dislike and reprove all, to check every man's sin, and every man's carelessness of God's worship and service; but no men's sins, no men's negligence and corruption in the service of God, ought to dislike him so much and be so earnest against, as the sins and carelessness of those who, by some special profession, come near to God. The minister should be like affected to his Master, the servant to his Lord. What God most mislikes, that ought they. It may be he may find these more kind, liberal, and respective† unto him; he must nevertheless reprove, and, if need be, use sharpness. The physician that finds men kind to him, and to honour him, when they are in health, will nevertheless, when they are fallen into a disease, use sharp medicines, and it may be sharper to them than others, that he may the sooner and sounder

* Religio scientia Dei est, ac per hoc omnis religiosus, hoc ipso quod religionem sequitur, Dei se voluntatem nosse testatur.—*Sal. ad. eccle. Ca.* lib. ii.

† That is 'respectful.'—ED.

restore them. It is the sign of a false prophet, when his mouth is not filled, to prepare and proclaim war; and when it is, to cry all peace: Micah iii. 5, 'Thus saith the Lord, concerning the prophets that deceive my people, and bite them with their teeth, and cry peace; but if a man put not into their mouths, they prepare war against him.'

*Use* 2. To admonish all such as come nigh unto God by special profession, that they endure the words of reproof from the mouth of the minister, if he deal more sharply with their sins, covetousness, usury, envy, quarrellings, pride and vanities; and particularly for the sin in hand, for their cold prayers, sleepy attending, negligent or late coming, the omission and remission of their care publicly, but specially privately, in the worship and service of God; they must not grudge and go away discontented, saying, He knows me well, he might have forborne this; I have been an old professor and an old disciple. Hast thou? then is thy sin the greater, and God is more displeased with it; and so ought his ministers less to spare thee, and thou the rather to take it from them. As Moses said, See, Israel will not hear, then how will Pharaoh? I wonder not many times to see common Christians and carnal men to distaste reproofs, when I find professors so disliking them. But as their sins are the greater, sin compared with sin, their reproofs should be the sharper, as in diseases.

*Use* 3. To teach every man to consider of his profession which he makes of God's service and fear, and thereby to know he is more bound to procure God's name to be honoured, and in himself and his to be most careful for his service and worship. His profession requireth he be more devout in prayer, more watchful and diligent in hearing, and in every duty whereby God is immediately worshipped and glorified, more careful. This his profession requires of him; which, if he perform not, he must know, that as every sin he committeth is more heinous, so his carelessness and corruption in the service of God, is much more intolerable and heinous in the sight of God, than his who makes no profession. Thou seest a man who is but a state-Christian and professor withdraw himself and be negligent to come to the place of God's worship, thou dislikest; and yet occasion of friends, pleasure or profit, will sometime draw thee aside from it; thy sin is far more intolerable than his. So of sleeping; thy nod is worse than his half-hour's nap. For to thee Christ saith, as to Peter: Mark xiv. 37, 'Sleepest *thou?*' And so in every duty of God's worship. We are then far worse than ethnics, because we ought to be better, because our profession and manners are repugnant, and we are not what we profess ourselves to be.*

*Obj.* Then better not profess at all.

* Ideo Ethnicis deteriores sumus, quia meliores esse debemus, quia pugnamus professionem nostram moribus nostris, nec sumus id quod profitemur.—*Salv.*

*Ans.* Admit thy conceit; but what is gained by it? Paul saith, Rom. ii. 12, 'For as many as have sinned without the law, shall perish also without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law;' and Christ, Luke xii. 47, 48, 'That servant that knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew it not, and yet did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men commit much, the more of him will they ask.' There was one had two sons, Mat. xxi. 28; he that said he would not and did, was commendable. Do thou like, and it shall be well with thee, but otherwise thy not-profession shall also condemn thee, and if it be less, yet if thou perish, thou hast gained little. The best is to profess and also perform with all care the service of God, then thou shalt be blessed in thy deed.

*Have polluted it.* The act of these persons, the Israelites, the polluting and corrupting of the worship of God. And here is the cause why God will take his worship and word from them: they polluted and corrupted it, and made no account of it.

*Doct.* The profaning of God's name, that is the corrupting and contemning of God's word and worship, is that which procures God to take it away and remove it from a people and land, as here, and Isa. xxix. 10–14, Jer. vii. 13, 14, 'Therefore now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I rose up early, and spake unto you, but when I spake, ye would not hear me; neither when I called would ye answer; therefore will I do unto this house, whereupon my name is called, wherein also ye trust, even unto the place that I gave unto you and your fathers, as I have done unto Shiloh.'

*Use* 1. This teacheth us to behold God's just judgment upon the Church of Rome, which was once a famous light and a flourishing church, but it grew both to contemn the word of God and to corrupt his worship. It preferred the church above it, yea, the Pope, holding he might dispense with the word of God; so Gratian, specially the New Testament, so Panormitan. The church can make moral precepts mutable, so Gratian, with infinite such like. The worship it hath corrupted by unwritten and lying traditions, by such a burden of ceremonies, as never any superstition had; by the precepts of men, and such like. That God hath dealt justly, he hath taken from them his word, and left them in palpable darkness more than Egypt, 2 Thess. ii. 11. And now are they as a man out of his way, and yet thinks he is right: the further he goes the more he is out of the way, and no hope of returning, because he persuadeth himself he is in the right way.

*Use* 2. This may make us fear that the day of the mourning for the gospel is not far, at least in God's

justice and his dealing with others; because, though corruption hath not seized upon his worship, yet contempt of the word is everywhere.

*Use* 3. The church, and the chief in it, the magistrates, are here admonished, if they desire that the gospel and his worship should abide amongst us, that they take heed it be not corrupted nor contemned, which is the very life and breath of the church, the vital spirits, which, being corrupted, bring death to the whole. They ought to make laws against error and heresy, superstition and other corruptions, and severely to execute them against whosoever dare privately or publicly, secretly or openly, sow any cockle with the pure wheat of God's word, and labour to keep it in as much sincerity and simplicity as may be; labouring to keep the fire upon the Lord's altar, the lamps burning in the temple, and the Levites unforsaken; labouring for the maintenance of the faith which was given unto the saints, Jude, ver. 3; correcting and punishing all contemners of it, who or howsoever, lest God do remove it from us.

*Use* 4. To teach every man, as he desireth there should be peace and truth in his days, so to repent of his corrupting, polluting, or contemning of this, whether before or since his calling, and now to labour for his part to keep it in integrity and purity, to have it in all honour and high esteem; that if God for the general do remove it, yet his sin be not a provocation to it. The removing of it will be grief enough, more when he shall be guilty himself as a procurer of it. As sickness and trouble is heavy, so more when a man is guilty by his own intemperancy or miscarrying of himself, by surfeiting and such like; he hath brought it upon himself, and pulled it with his own hands upon him. So in this.

*In that you say, the table of the Lord is polluted.* This is the first particular, their thoughts, according to the phrase often used in this chapter; whence it is not only manifest that the Lord knows the thoughts of men and the things they do in secret, but he reveals them to others; his lieutenants upon earth, his ministers, and magistrates, to reprove, or correct and punish.

*Table polluted.* They contemned the table because it was but rudely built, and the offering because it was burnt to ashes, Jerome.

*Doct.* The thing that makes men contemn holy duties and the worship of God, is because they look too much upon the baseness of the means. *Vide* ver. 7, *ut ante.*

*And the fruit thereof, even his meat not to be regarded.* The priest's part; they thought anything would serve them; contemning God's worship, they contemned the means of his worship.

*Doct.* The contempt of God's worship and the contempt of his ministers go together; they are in one people, one age, one place, the fruit of the altar and the meat of it despised together. So it is here, so 1 Sam. ii. 17. It is all one, whether the cause be just and they justly despised or no, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14–16, Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

*Reason* 1. Because all the honour and account that the ministers can have or look for is for their work, for the worship and service of God they perform amongst them, 1 Thes. v. 12, 13. Now, if their work once grow into contempt and disgrace, they needs must; which was the reason why Demetrius pleaded so hard for the honour of Diana, for their own gain and honour, knowing that they were honoured for her who, if once dishonoured, would make them to be dishonoured, Acts xix. 24, &c. So in this of the true worship.

*Reason* 2. Because the corruption of man is such, that when he should respect the minister for his work, the chest for the treasure, he respects the work for the minister, the treasure for the chest. Therefore, if he once grow to dislike him, he will dislike it.

*Use* 1. This noteth the cause why the worship of God and his service is in these days in that contempt that we find it to be in all places. It is amongst us still; God hath not taken away the ark of his presence, but it is in small account, little esteem and reverence. It is no marvel, seeing the Lord's ministers are in such contempt as they are; what difference or distinction soever men can make of them, yet herein they differ not, but are all in contempt. No sort nor condition of men, no men of any profession in the land, are anything like near in the like general contempt and disgrace that they are; by courtiers and countrymen, by citizens and men abroad, by rich and poor, by old and young, they are, as 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, marked, despised, misused. Is it then any marvel if the worship of God be contemned? When the ambassador is contemned, the embassage will and must be worse liked of; when the physician, the physic he brings. Nothing that Micah can say or do can be liked; Ahab dislikes his person. And again, *è converso*, this lays out unto us why the ministers are in such contempt, the worship itself is in contempt. They are deprived of their double honour in the most part, because they most honour not the word and worship of God. Whenas the message of David sent by his servants is misconstrued by the Ammonites, then are his messengers abused, 2 Sam. x.; so when the worship of God, then the ministers. These are two twins, as it were, the contempt of the one, and the contempt of the other; it is hard to tell which first comes forth; haply some may think the one, some the other, as with the twins, Gen. xxxviii. 28, &c.

*Use* 2. This must instruct the ministers of God, if they have any desire that the worship of God should be had in account and reverence, and not in contempt; that they carry themselves wisely and discreetly, sincerely and soberly, both in the work of their ministry and in other carriage of their life; that they give no just cause of contempt of the word, but that they may

rather adorn it. So St Paul persuades both Timothy and Titus, and in them other ministers, for his charges were not personal nor temporary, 1 Tim. iv. 12, 2 Tim. iv. 5, Titus ii. 7, 8; for if all must so live and carry themselves, that the gospel of God may be well spoken of and his worship regarded; if servants, Titus ii. 10; if women, even young women, verses 4, 5; if all professors, Titus iii. 8; much more ought preachers: they ought so to handle those mysteries and worship of God, that they may strike reverence and esteem into the people; so to carry themselves, that they may get account and estimation to themselves, and so to the worship of God. For when the ministers of God handle the word simply and profitably, and other parts of God's worship with great reverence, and when they practise it carefully, then will it be better affected and reverenced of others; but when they handle them corruptly and carelessly, when they are not the same men in their lives they seem to be in the pulpit, they make the ordinances of God to be out of request, and to be loathed, as Eli's wicked sons made men abhor the offering of the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 17, both by their using of it, and carriage of their lives; for even wholesome meat men loathe an unwholesome or sluttish housewife's or cook's dressing.

*Use* 3. This may admonish all those who contemn the ministers of God, who do scoff, deride, and disgrace them most, who seek most that the worship of God should be had in honour, whatsoever profession they make outwardly, it is yet manifest they have no inward love to religion, nay, that they contemn and despise the worship of God. They may use the works of his service, and perform worship for the outward act, but it is without any love and reverence to it; but as the heathen man would have his tyrant to seem religious, that his people might fear him, because they might think the gods would help him if they should rebel or rise against him, so these, for one sinister respect or other.

*Doct.* It hath been a continual portion of the ministers of God to be contemned and not regarded, to be basely thought of and spoken of, though in this place it may seem to be a just judgment upon these; yet the best and most sincere ministers have been no better esteemed or regarded, 2 Kings ix. 11, Jer. xxix. 26, Acts ii. 13 and xxvi. 24, Mat. xi. 18, 1 Cor. iv. 9–14.

*Reason* 1. Because it befell Christ, who was many ways evil spoken of, John x. 20, Mat. xi. 19, then no marvel if his ministers and members be in the same condition; for, Mat. x. 24, 25, 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple to be as his master is, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?'

*Reason* 2. Because the ministers of God must deal with and reprove the sins of men, and not spare them, but threaten them for them. Now when they are, as Basil speaketh, like physicians, who make war, not with their patient, but with his disease and passion, so not with them but their sins; they think he is their enemy, and maketh war against them, therefore they speak evil of him.

*Use* 1. To teach us not to be offended, if we find now many mockers and scorners of the ministers and ministry, many who regard them not, but contemn them, and raise up all manner of evil speeches against them. It is no new thing, for there is none under heaven. It was prophesied it should be, 2 Peter iii. 3, 'mockers,' 2 Tim. iii. 3, 'despisers of them who are good,' and therefore still will be. While the accuser of the brethren doth rule in the air, and is prince of this world, and doth rule in the children of disobedience, he will make them mock and despise, contemn and slander, and oftentimes such as would make reasonable men afraid, lest their slanders should be found false; yet that troubles them not, because they still hope it will make for their advantage, he instructing them, who taught Machiavell.* Slander one confidently, and somewhat will stick to him. If that be true which Tertullian writeth, *Adversus Gent. Apol*, cap. i.,† nothing is worse than to hate men whom they know not, though they deserve to be hated. What is it then that they should slander men whom they know not, when the thing deserveth great honour?

*Use* 2. This must teach the ministers patiently to abide the base conceits and opinions of men. It is no new thing; if they did it to the green tree, what will they do to the dry? If to those who have lived before, more to these. It is that whereunto they were appointed, 1 Thes. iii. 3. That of Christ will be true, Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you for my name falsely. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you:' which, if any incur not less or more in his portion, he may fear and suspect himself whether he be Christ's or no, seeing Christ so speaketh: Luke vi. 26, 'Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you; for so did their fathers to the false prophets.' He may suspect himself rather false than true. That of Plinius Cecilius, which he was wont to set upon his schools, may be applied; *Sciamus eum pessimè dixisse, cui maximè sit applausum.* We know he that hath most applause, hath made the worst oration.

Ver. 13. *Ye said also, Behold, it is a weariness! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye offered that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye*

* Detrahe audacter, et aliquid adhærebit.—*Machiavel.*

† Nihil iniquius, quàm ut oderint homines, quos ignorant, etiamsi res meretur odium.—*Tertul.*

*offered an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.*

*Ye say also, Behold, it is a weariness!* The second corruption here reproved is outward pollution, which is double, in speech and gesture. The speech some expound as spoken by the priests, taking up the breast or shoulder of a carrion sheep which was his due, Lev. vii. 31, 32, See what I have for my labour; but the priests themselves had a hand in this sin. This speech is expounded as if it were spoken by a crafty dissimulation and arrogant bragging. See how I am wearied with carrying this weighty sheep, when a man might have blown it over; or they say, they are marvellously weary with carrying so weighty and tidy a beast upon their shoulders, and that they might feign it by their gesture: they shew it by panting, and fetching their breath deep, and drawing of it short (Montanus). Some expound, what a toil is this that we spend all in the service of God; the complaint of the people, that they were at great toil and pains, and excessive cost and charge in God's service, as over-wearied with labour, and eaten out and undone with expenses, especially coming so raw and bare home, and therefore God was to content himself with it, though worse.

*You have snuffed at it.* Either you blow and pant, as tired with bringing a tidy beast; still their arrogant dissembling continued: or by a disdainful and contemptuous gesture, you shew your unwillingness to serve God, and how vile and tedious it is to you. It is the gesture of one refusing a thing with disdain and contempt, as Ps. x. 5.

*Saith the Lord of hosts*, who is most good and pure, and a powerful and just revenger of all such wickedness.

*And ye offered that which was torn.* Their practice and dealing, their sacrifice, faulty two ways; they brought blind and lame, or, if any good, not their own. First, in manner of getting of it, it was such as was stolen. Some expound *raptum*, spoiled and wearied with beasts, *raptus ex ore lupi*, which was dainty among the heathen, as finer meat and the tenderer; so Calvin. If by chance a sheep or other beast were wearied,* or so, they would be content to bestow it on God. But this is not like, for sacrifices were brought quick, not dead. But *raptum*, rather *furto et rapina quæsitum*, as Lyra; they brought such to God as was gotten by evil means, thinking to stop his mouth, as man's, with part of the booty, Ps. l. 21.

*Behold, it is a weariness!* The complaint of the people, thinking too much of that they did in the service of God.

*Doct.* Hypocrites, natural and wicked men do think all time too much, all pains too great, all cost too chargeable, spent upon the service of God and his worship, Amos viii. 5, Isa. lviii. 3; for it carrieth a kind of repentance in them, for that they had done all that in the service of God, when they aimed not at his service, but their own profit. This is that which was in Judas: John xii. 5, 6, 'Why is this waste?' murmuring at it, and made a good colour for it, that he might also infect others, pretending it for the members of Christ, against the head, by which he brought the disciples into the same sin with him, Mat. xxvi.

*Reason* 1. Because love is the ground of all duties, especially of the cheerful, ready, diligent performing of them, and the cost which men think nothing too much of where they love: parents to their children, the wife to the husband. Now, no natural and wicked men have the love of God, or can have it, for it is a supernatural gift; therefore no marvel if they deal thus.

*Reason* 2. Because the motives of these duties, and the manner of doing them, are the benefits received, and the blessings and rewards to come upon them that do them so. Now natural and wicked men want spiritual eyes to see God, the giver of all that they have, and the reward for things to come, and what profit the service of God brings to them; then no marvel, though they think all too much.

*Obj.* Micah vi. 6, 7, here are hypocrites that thought not great things too much for God.

*Sol.* This they offered, but they never did it. It may be a question if God would have taken them at their word, whether they would have performed or no; for many promise largely that are short enough in performing. But admit they would, yet that they would not have done it for any service to God at all, but only for a safeguard to themselves and their sins. The prophet threatened them with the judgments of God if they did not return from their sins. They thinking to save themselves, and keep their sins, which were so dear unto them, offer thus liberally, and it may be would have given so; but it was not for God, but themselves. As the mariner in a storm or danger, and the traveller when he is beset with thieves, will cast away liberally.

*Use* 1. This teacheth that there are a great company of men in the church who are but mere natural men at the best, but hypocrites in the church, seeing so many find, and profess themselves to find, such tediousness and weariness in the service of God, thinking the time too much, the pains too great, the cost very burdensome, weary of Sabbaths, and the times and places of exercises, can be content to serve with ease, but not with any strictness, or, as they account it, inconvenience, a little labour haply, but no cost without grudging. To whom the Sabbath, when it cometh, is like to a bad guest, whose departure is far more welcome to them than his coming; so is the end more acceptable than the beginning, and every hour is a day till it be over. Others think it was ordained for their ease and refreshing from their labours, and not for God's service; and therefore think it too much to give the whole day to God, too much to hear twice, but intolerable they should be bound to make care of it in the whole, in private besides the public service. Many masters are there who think much to give to God

* Qu. 'worried'?—ED.

a whole Sabbath, who will not remit their servants a piece of one of the six days. Many a servant who can be content to toil himself more that day with the works of pleasure and the works of Satan, than in the week with the works of his master, but thinks everything too much for God, as Chrysostom. What commands doth the devil lay on man! how laborious! how grievous! Yet the difficulty is no impediment to his commands;* but here a little thing hinders, and they think all too much. How much more shew they themselves wicked men, who, like Judas, find fault with others care or cost in the service of God, and draw others' with them into the same opinion, to think it is too much, when it is short of that that is expressly required.

*Use* 2. To teach every man, when he finds any such weariness in the service of God, his heart thinking too much of his cost and pains, to censure it in himself as a relic of the natural man, whether it come of himself or he be drawn unto it by others (as the disciples were by Judas); and to humble himself for it, for it cannot be good coming from this, and men cannot gather figs of thorns, nor grapes of thistles; to judge it to come from this, that his love is unperfect, as his knowledge is but in part; or from this, that he hath not the feeling of God's love, his bounty, and mercy towards him as he ought, neither knows the fruit of this service.

*Use* 3. To teach every one to labour against this corruption, and to withstand it, that it seize not upon him, seeing God taxeth these for it; for wherefore else but that we should avoid it, and never think either pains, or time, or cost, too much in his service and worship? For which purpose two things must we labour for: one, the love of God, for nothing will we think enough then for him, as Jacob and Shechem; another, delight in the duties, Isa. lviii. 13, Ps. cxxii. 1, John vi. 34. Give me a man that delights in anything, and all is not enough for it.

*And ye have snuffed at it.* Their gesture, which, as it noteth their unwillingness, so taken as some do take it, for panting, then it signifies their arrogant dissembling, by which they made show as if they had brought most excellent sacrifices, when they were nothing, and brought nothing but wild and base sacrifices to God.

*Doct.* It is a grievous sin for men to make show of great care and diligence in the service and worship of God, and indeed do nothing less. Men cannot abide it, specially an upright and plain dealing man, Prov. xxix. 27, much less God that is righteousness itself, Ezek. xiv. 7, 8, Isa. lviii. 2, 3, Ps. v. 6, Acts v.

*Reason* 1. Because it is gross hypocrisy, and so abominable unto the Lord, who, as he is a most simple essence, most holy and pure, cannot endure such doubling.

* Quæ diabolus imperavit, quam laboriosa? quam gravia? nec difficultas fuit ejus mandatis impedimentum. — *Chrys. hom.* 19, *ad Pop. Ant.*

*Reason* 2. Because offences which are done openly, and committed apparently, do not so much offend a generous and valiant mind and man, as when they are done by craft and dissembling: the reasons, because the former argues the audaciousness and impudence of the actor, the latter the great contempt and irrision of him which is so provoked.

*Use* 1. This will convince many of gross sin before God, who make such show of great service of God, and yet do nothing less. To say little of papists, as of monks, who commend their manner of worship or services, who brag that they are continually in prayer, that they rise in the night season, with the hazard of their health, to keep watch for the salvation of others, and waste their bodies with watchings, fastings, and other exercises; yet they think it skills not much what manner of prayers, how without affection, being but, as Basil speaketh, like the lowing of so many oxen, though they be never so barbarous, yet God will accept. As the Pope provided for his idle and unlearned priests by his canon, *quod verba Dei non debent esse subjecta regulis Donati.* To say nothing, I say, of their show of service, nor of the lay papists who make great show of great service by the account of their prayers upon their beads, when few of them understand what they say. To say nothing of these who are without; and so what have I to do to judge them? How many have we within, who are here convinced of sin, because they make great show, and yet do nothing less? Many make great show of serving God in prayer, others in hearing of the word, and therefore some panting, and blowing, and sweating about such things, but do nothing less; because it cannot be they can make account of preaching who regard not prayer, nor they of prayer who reverence not preaching, because he cannot delight to hear God speak, that delights not to speak to God, and so *è contra.* And as Bernard said betwixt prayer and fasting, so say I of this; prayer obtaineth the power of fasting, and fasting the grace of prayer; this strengthens that, and that sanctifieth this.* Finally, they who come to the service of God, as Ezekiel speaketh, shall be answered as he saith, for they make show and do not.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to take heed of hypocrisy, and making show of diligence and devotion in the service of God, when there is no such thing in the heart; for that will not go current with God, but will be severely both censured and sentenced by him; as amongst other things, it was in this people one principal cause of removing the worship from them, so of gospel from us; for in shows, and colours, and pretences may he deceive men, but he cannot God. That which St Jerome saith, *ad Rusticanum*, Epist. iv., *Honor nominis Christiani fraudem facit magis, quam patitur, quodque pudet dicere, sed necesse est; ut saltem sic ad nostrum erubescamus dedecus.* So is it

* Oratio virtutem impetrat jejunandi, jenunium gratiam orandi: hoc illam corroborat, illa hoc sanctificat.—*Bernardus.*

true in respect of men; but it cannot be so of God, who sees the inward parts, Heb. iv. 13; but such deceit shall verily suffer from him, who cannot endure hypocrisy; for such sons and servants he cannot endure, who will say and make great show, but do nothing. Therefore ought every one, if not to be as the windows of the temple were, wider within than without, yet to be no more in show than they are in truth, and to labour to do everything they may make show of.

*And ye offered that which was torn.* Their practice, and here the first fault of their sacrifice, that they brought none of their own, but such as was gotten by unlawful means.

*Doct.* Things taken from others by deceit, violence, oppression, and wrong, are not fit matter for sacrifice to God, to be given to the poor, to good, religious, or charitable uses; this is reproved in these. Hereto tends the commandment: Deut. xxiii. 17, 18, 'There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a whore-keeper of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt neither bring the hire of a whore, nor the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow; for even both these are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.' Isa. lxi. 8, 'I hate robbery for burnt-offering.' Luke xi. 41, Eph. iv. 28.

*Reason* 1. Because every man ought to offer unto the Lord of his own, not others'; now only all that is a man's own, which is gotten and had by lawful means; that which is gotten by unlawful means is another's, not his.

*Reason* 2. Because this were to make God partaker of the sin, as much as in them lies, and whereunto he should be accessory, if he should accept any such thing, as receivers of stolen wares.

*Obj.* Luke xvi. 9, 'And I say unto you, Make you friends with the riches of iniquity; that, when ye shall want, they shall receive you into everlasting habitations.' Then, is it lawful thus to dispose of a man's goods, though gotten by iniquity?

*Ans.* Christ indeed calls them riches of iniquity, which he shews not of riches unjustly gotten, but of those which are lawfully gotten, seeing the doctrine we have taught is true. They are called thus, as some think, because they are *inæqualitatis*, unequally divided, or because they were gotten by the sins of the grandfathers, or great great fathers, or because they are matter of sin and iniquity; not that they are either such of themselves, nor by God's ordinance, who hath made them, *remedia humanæ miseriæ, non instrumenta voluptatis et superbiæ*, but they are such by the corruption and infirmity of man; as wine, good and neat, put into a musty cask, will in time smell mustily like the vessel, so that as often as a man drinks of it, he saith it is musty; so riches, good of themselves, yet possessed by a corrupt heart, grow evil, that thou mayest call them wicked riches, because they are causes of wickedness, as the apostle speaketh of evil times. And so Christ calleth them here, not persuading them of the riches they have gotten by iniquity, to offer sacrifices unto God on the altar of the poor, or any otherwise to procure favour from God; but persuades them that those riches which men commonly so use to pride, or voluptuousness, and other sins, that they would use well to procure favour, and good will unto themselves both of God and man.

*Use* 1. This serveth to shew that many men's sacrifices and liberality is unlawful, and no ways acceptable to God, because it is of such things as are evil, gotten by unlawful means. Such is the liberality and hospitality of many men in the country, maintained by oppression, racking of rents, dispeopling of towns, and such like. Such is the liberality of many citizens, who in many years get together a great deal of wealth by fraud, oppression, the cursed trade of usury, and at their deaths leave a little to religious or charitable uses; frank at their deaths of that they cared not how they came by it in their lives, things which are not their own, but other men's, of which they ought to have made restitution, as Zaccheus did, Luke xix. 8; and out of the remnant have given to good uses, when a mite had been better, and would have been better accepted than a million without it; and for which now, though the loins of many bless God for that they left, yet they are burning in hell for it, if that be true of Augustine, *Ep.* liv. *Macedo*, as true it is, according to the analogy of the Scripture. If the thing for which the sin was committed may be restored, and is not, the man doth not repent, but dissemble; but if he deal truly, the sin shall not be remitted, unless restitution (if it may be) be made.* And one thing there is which is yet more unacceptable to God, and justly reproved, that they leave behind them for such uses moneys to be employed by usury, by their companies and other, wherein they are like to lewd voluptuous men, who having lived in wantonness all their lives, leave their goods, and make their bastards their heirs, that their shame might never be put out, but that they might be like Absalom's pillar to all posterity; so these, that their infamy might remain, and that their reproach be never put out. If that conceit of some were true, that Paul's glory increaseth as the number of them increaseth who are won by that he writ, I should then think that both their glory increaseth who get their goods well, and have left it to good uses by lawful means; and their woe and torment, who got it by unlawful means, and left it by unlawful means to increase for the benefit of others. But I have no such warrant; only I say, if restitution made passage for salvation to come to Zaccheus's house, non-restitution makes passage for condemnation to come to these men, or they to it.

* Si res aliena propter quam peccatum est, cum reddi possit, non redditur, non agitur pœnitentia, sed fingitur; si autem veraciter agitur, non remittitur peccatum nisi restituatur ablatum, sed, ut dixi, cum restituti potest.—*August. Epist.* liv. *Maced.*

Let no man think I speak this to discourage men from doing good, but to direct them to do good after a good manner, and to free myself from participating in future sins of such men, remembering how confidently Augustine speaks it: *Illud fidentissmè dixerim, qui ad se confugientem quantum honestè potest ad restituendum non compellit, socium esse fraudis et criminis.*

*Use* 2. To inform men for time to come to do that they do and offer to God, to do it of their own, not others'; such as they lawfully come by, not by unlawful means. David, that holy man of God, would not offer to God of another's, not taken by violence from him, but though he would give it him freely, haply fearing lest it would not be so acceptable when it was not of his own, though not gotten unlawfully, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24; so should every man do that would have his offering acceptable to God; they ought not to take from one to give to another, but of their own to give to God, either mediately or immediately; for men may not do evil that good may come of it, Rom. iii. 8. Thou art lying upon a sick-bed, it may be thy death-bed, which is the time when men distribute things of moment and perpetuity. Think with thyself, that after death comes judgment, Heb. ix., and know that thou must give an account of thy goods, how thou hast got them, and how thou hast left them. Therefore, if thou hast oppressed, or wronged, or defrauded any by any means, make him restitution to the full; and if thy ability be such, more than full; and of the rest give to the poor, and to good uses; for if thou thinkest the giving of these will excuse thee to the Judge for the other, thou deceivest thyself. It were as if a thief, being arraigned for a robbery, should think to answer the judge, and escape sentence of death, because he gave much of it to the next poor he met; so in this, for the Lord hates robbery for a burnt-offering; and if thou wouldst have a blessing, Eccles. xi. 1, 'cast thy bread upon the waters,' and leave it to be employed lawfully, though less benefit come to the poor, and a shorter time, not by that which is odious to God and man; for an usurer is a reproach amongst men, God casting that shame upon him; for how canst thou answer Christ at that judgment how thou hast left thy goods?

Now these Jews, bringing such sacrifices of such things as were thus corruptly come by, did it to appease God's displeasure against them for the sin, and thought so, as it were, to stop his mouth, whence some gather this point not unnaturally.

*Doct.* It is the custom and false conceit of a natural man to think he may make God a friend, or pacify him with part of that he hath wickedly gotten, or by some outward thing, as his riches, and substance, and other ceremonies; as here, and Amos ii. 8, 'They lie down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their God.' It is spoken of idolaters, in respect of their idols, yet it serveth to shew the nature of men, who, in their corruption, think no better of the true God than a false God, Micah vi. 6, 7. To this purpose may we apply that, Deut. xxiii. 17, 18, for God's forbidding insinuates the proneness of man's nature to it, as in all the commandments.

*Reason* 1. Because God appointed sacrifices, and propitiatory sacrifices in the law of the outward things, and they neither learning more nor looking forward, nor seeing that it was not these which did appease God, but that which they signified, still relied upon them, and so thought that outward things would do it; and in proportion natural men from them.

*Reason* 2. Because they think corruptly and wickedly of God, that he is as themselves, or as a corrupt judge, who will be reconciled by gifts, not caring how it is come by, so his hand be filled.

*Reason* 3. Because it must be needs a vain and false conceit to imagine that should appease him, when it is a means to bring the sin to remembrance, seeing God knows what it is, and how it was come by, as well as himself.

*Use* 1. This may let us see the notable policy of the Church of Rome, who seeing the nature of man to be such, as that they both think to appease the wrath of God, and would thus reconcile his favour, rather than with true repentance and turning to God, to the end they may keep a multitude still with them, and not a little enrich themselves, have taught them that with such bodily exercises and temporal things they may appease God, and buy out their sins, as the building of chapels, monasteries, religious houses, appointing of masses, buying of pardons, and bestowing upon the church, whether living or dying; nay, if they be not able, or careless of themselves, others may for money purchase such things for them. Hence it is that the church (as they call it) is so glorious and rich, that is, those churchmen, that, as St Jerome said to Heliodorus, *Epist.* 3, they add money to money, and stuff their purses, and purchase women's goods by flattery. They are richer monks than they were seculars, and possess wealth under poor Christ, which they had not under wealthy Satan; they are rich in the church, who were beggars in the world. And in another epistle, contrary to all men's opinions, they die very rich, who lived under a profession of poverty.*

*Use* 2. To overthrow the carnal conceit of natural men, who live in their sins, in their impenitency, and think by alms and some such things, or outward works, to satisfy God for other sins, and often for those sins by which they got them. Many men, when they spend the whole week in sin, think to make amends

* Nummum addunt nummo, et in marsupium suffocantes matronarum opes venantur obsequiis: sunt ditiores monachi, quàm fuerunt seculares; possident opes sub Christo paupere, quas sub locuplete diabolo non habuerant, et suspicit eos ecclesia divites, quos mundus tenuit ante mendicos.—*Jerome ad Heliod., Epist.* 3, and *Epist.* 4 *to Rustic.* Contra omnem opinionem plenis sacculis moriuntur divites, qui quasi pauperes vixerunt.

for all by acting some outward work of his service on the Lord's day, and think that their outward and customable serving of God in the morning and evening, *pro forma tantum*, should satisfy for the sins of the rest of the day. And many, when they have spent all their life in sin, think by some dole or some gift to satisfy for all the rest, that the ministers can speak more of their gifts than of their sorrow and repentance; as one saith, *sperans aut placaturum pro peccatis, aut placiturum non obstante peccato.* But to such I say, as Prov. xxi. 27, 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind.' They shall find they have trusted to a broken reed.

*Use* 3. To teach every man not to let natural reason deceive him, to make him to trust to any such natural or worldly means, thereby to reconcile God to him, or to appease him. These things can no more do it than oil will quench the fire. Such a consuming fire is God, that these will rather kindle his wrath. And if he be deceived that would think to quench fire by that, then must he needs be that shall think by this, which is matter for the wrath of God. He should learn to know that those outward things are not the most acceptable sacrifice to God. That which is acceptable is, Ps. li. 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a contrite sprit: a contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' He that receiveth this from God, may have comfort that God will accept him, as a physician that directs a man to the only restorative.

*Obj.* Daniel iv. 24, 'Redeem thy sins by almsdeeds.'

*Sol.* It is answered by some that by sins is here understood the punishments of sin, and they think that works, proceeding from faith, prevail not a little with God to lessen and mitigate temporal punishments. But it is not like; seeing he spoke to such a king who could not work anything by faith at all. But the word is not here *redeem*, but *break off.* If it were properly so taken, then might men not only redeem the punishment of their sin, but the sin itself, which opinion is not held. Again, if it be a redemption, it is not to be made before God, but in recompence to those whom he hath hindered; and the prophet speaks not here of the forgiveness of sins, as the old Latin, *forsan ignoscet Deus*, but of the prolonging of his peace and prosperity, as Tremellius hath it. Finally, the words are *break off*, turning from wicked ways, and seeking God's will; and whereas thou hast been an oppressor of the poor, and an afflicter of men in misery, shew thy repentance by dealing mercifully with the oppressed, and having compassion on them, as Zaccheus, Luke xix. 8.

Ver. 14. *But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is terrible among the heathen.*

*But cursed be the deceiver.* In this is contained the last judgment against this people, and it is positive; as before he had threatened the taking away of their goods, so here to inflict some punishment upon them. And in this we observe, first, the judgment; secondly, the sin; thirdly, reasons whereby they may be persuaded the judgment shall come; if they repent not themselves of their sins, and perform their vows.

*But cursed.* As woes in the Scripture, Mat. xxiv. and Isa. v., and otherwhere are twofold, so are curses; first, temporal, sending of outward evils, Deut. xxviii. 15–17, 20–22, or turning of good things to hurt, Ps. cix. 7, and lxix. 22; secondly, spiritual, most fearful, Rom. i. 28, Mat. xxvii. 5, 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11.

*The deceiver.* The sin is general, thus expressing the nature of an hypocrite, that he is a deceiver, one that carrieth himself craftily, who casts and fetcheth about in his mind how he may deceive both God and man, and who deals craftily with the Lord.

*Who voweth a male.* The particular sin, vowing, and not paying, when he is able to perform; having a male, that is, one without blemish, such as the law required. Here is thought to be *epitheti eclipsis*, as in Isaiah i. 18, *wool* for *white wool.* But some understand by male a perfect and absolute offering, the use of the word being such in divers authors. Now the vow here spoken of is either the general vow of their circumcision, or else their particular, when willingly they vowed a thing, being not tied unto it by any law, and dealt deceitfully in that, which should make it the greater sin.

*And sacrifice a corrupt thing;* a weak and feeble, so a corrupt thing: as it were repenting of their vow, they bring unto him a corrupt, vicious, and unlawful sacrifice.

*Doct.* The Lord is able, and will not only withdraw good things from men that dishonour him, and live profanely and wickedly, but will inflict much evil upon them, and punish them with all kind and variety of curses. As here, so 2 Chron. vii. 13, Deut. xxviii. 16, 60, 61. This he shewed in Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 8, &c., and ii. 12, 13; in David, 2 Sam. vii.; in Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30. The trials of Job shew what he can do when he will punish.

*Reason* 1. Because in blessing he can deal thus; not only take away the evil, but shower down many blessings upon them; so in cursing, for these are the two arms of God, his mercy and justice; neither is shorter nor longer than the other, unless he be unperfect; these are his treasures, or he hath treasures of both, neither fuller nor emptier than the other.

*Reason* 2. Because he is a true God, and so infinite in all things. He is not as the false gods of the heathen, who had little, even their great god Jupiter, who they thought would be soon drawn dry if he should punish much and many; if send abroad apace his

revenging arrows, his quiver would be empty. Not so with God, whose mercy is a treasure inexhaustible; so his justice, not as the sea, but as the fire, the sun (Chrysostom).

*Reason* 3. Because it more manifests his displeasure, and men are more sensible of it, to be humbled by it either in truth or hypocrisy.

*Use* 1. To stand in awe, and fear God; to fear to displease or provoke him, who can not only take from us that we have, but bring the contrary upon us, many, and strange, and grievous plagues. Men we fear, and avoid to provoke them when they are of power, and yet often we hold them at defiance, because we know their worst is but to take our place, livings, credit, or liberty from us, at the worst but our lives, and can then not hurt us; but God can go further; not only deprive us of that we have, and all that is dear to us, and take away life, but lay crosses infinite upon us in this life and the life to come. If men, much more he is to be feared, Mat. x. 28. If Jacob was afraid of Isaac's curse, Gen. xxii. 12, much more of God's, being real things, and not verbal; for so is man's only; he is but the mouth of God, and sure they are they will light where he will lay them.

*Use* 2. To instruct every man who finds God's judgments that he is deprived of any good thing he hath, to humble himself, and seek to God, and search his own ways, that he may turn unto him, lest he bring curses upon him; for as it is both just and usual with God, when men profit not by the less judgment, to bring greater, as a father, when his son bows not with a twig, to beat him with a greater rod, so it is when men turn not to him by his private* judgments, to bring positive curses upon them; as princes, who first withdraw their favours from traitors, confiscate their goods, restrain their liberty, and after lay upon them some fearful punishment. Hath God then taken anything from thee that thou hadst, or that was beloved of thee, as thy goods, children, or any such thing? think seriously of it, and impute it not to secondary causes, though they may be greatly faulty, but look unto the Lord, and turn unto him; think not to make it good again, or recover thyself, but think of the other curses God hath threatened, and know these must come, if the other do not reform thee, yea, though he love thee. Physicians that desire the health of their patient, if they can, will haply recover it by enjoining them abstinence, and fasting, and a strict diet; if not, they will to purging, bleeding, and such like; so with God: much more if he hate thee.

*Use* 3. If thou be freed from any curse, be not secure, he hath variety of curses.

The contempt of his worship he hath threatened with the deprivation of it, the taking of it away. Now, it may be thought, this would not much trouble them who thought it a weariness, and could haply be content with it, and in their corruption account it a blessing; he therefore threateneth the punishing of it with positive curses and plagues.

*Doct.* The contempt and corruption of God's worship and the means of it, as of the word and sacraments, and such like, sacrifice and prayer, the Lord will sometime punish with the taking of it away, and sometime with it and other fearful curses and plagues, both spiritual and temporal, which, as it is here threatened, so was it performed to this people, who are now not only without the means of his worship, but are under many fearful judgments, as any nation in the world. It is that was threatened, Deut. xxviii. 47, 48, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17, Matt. xxi. 43, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12, 1 Sam. ii., Eli's sons; Acts xx. 9, Eutychus.

*Reason* 1. Because most men find no judgment in it at all, to be deprived of that they love not, as they account that no blessing to have that they delight not in; and so, as in this, they will never be drawn to see the mercy and favour of God, so not in that his justice and displeasure, that they might come to the sight of their sins. Whenas, then, those judgments open the eyes of their mind the better, and clear their spiritual sight, the Lord doth it more to torment them and affect them.

*Reason* 2. Because these being most sensible, men are by them usually made more careful of his service, either in hypocrisy, as Ahab, and Saul, and others; or in truth, as Manasseh.

*Use* 1. This may teach us a point which few men have thought of, but many have felt it, the cause why God hath so afflicted us with the plague and pestilence; his curses have been upon us. Many have haply thought of many sins of their own and others, but few have thought of this sin, that therefore it was because the word was contemned amongst us, and his worship corrupted by us; such weariness in his service, such great shows, and nothing indeed; such offering of sick, lame, and blind unto the Lord, such offerings of corrupt things unto him. If this be true, that such are accursed of God, then the other must needs be certain. The Philistines had the ark of God's presence, 1 Sam. v.; but because they used not it as they ought, therefore, ver. 6, they were smitten. So had the men of Bethshemesh, 1 Sam. vi.; but because they used not it as they ought, therefore the Lord slew among them fifty thousand and threescore and ten men, ver. 19. The gospel, the means of his worship, as the ark of his presence, hath been amongst us, but we have not used it well, therefore hath the hand of God been heavy upon us, as upon the Philistines; the number the Lord hath slain, hath surmounted the number of them of Bethshemesh. If it were just upon them, it is so upon us; and though this be removed, yet we cannot but fear that the curses of God hang over our heads still, seeing this sin is not repented of nor amended amongst us.

*Use* 2. This serveth to meet with the corruption of

* Qu. 'privative'?—ED.

those who could not, nor cannot be wakened with the former judgment, and think it a blessing rather than a curse. Whether they delight in popery or profaneness, they affected a superstitious worship or a loose life, they would be without controlment, and so take themselves not to be hurt, because that is but as they desire, that the word and worship of God should be gone; yet let this fear such an one, that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, he is an accursed man, and all the curses of God hang over his head; he is so in the decree of God, and he shall be so in the execution. What a fearful condition is he in, that is in ease and prosperity, sitting at a rich banquet, lying in a bed of down and ivory, having what his heart could desire, and yet having over his head a sharp sword with the point downward, hanging by the smallest hair, ready with every blast and every touch to fall upon him! How if he had thousands more, he that hath these curses over his head (as Isaac said, 'I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed'), God hath accursed him, and he shall be accursed.

*Cursed be the deceiver.* The parties upon whom this curse must fall, they are accounted deceivers; they deal deceitfully in the service of God, not serving of him as they are able. There are two parts of this deceit described, or it is made to consist in two things. The one, they serve him not as they are able; the other, for a time they make a great show, and promise piety and great duties of holiness; but eftsoon repent themselves and had rather omit it altogether, or perform it negligently, because it will be with some cost and expense of their goods; that he fears he should be a poor man if he should be faithful and constant in the service of God. For the first, it is said he hath a male; for the second, he voweth, and sacrificeth a corrupt thing.

For the first,

*Doct.* He that dealeth deceitfully in the Lord's service and worship, that is, that serveth him not as he is able, either for his outward goods and parts, or for his inward gifts, or any such thing, when he looks for a blessing from God for his service, he shall be accursed: 'Cursed is he that hath a male, and offereth a corrupt thing.' Jer. iv. 22, it is made a sin that procured destruction upon the land, that they served God not with their best wisdom. Hence was the curse upon Cain, Gen. iv. 3, 5, Hag. i. 2-6. And Solomon is taxed that he bestowed twice as much time in building his own house, as God's house; and Acts v.

*Reason* 1. Because he contemneth and despiseth the Lord, either thinking he cannot know what he doth, and how he dealeth with him; or that he is unjust and will not punish it, or thinking basely of him, that this is good enough; and therefore no marvel if he contemn him and accurse him, as 1 Sam. ii. 30.

*Reason* 2. Because he goeth flat against the main scope, and the end of the law; now whereas any breach of the law deserveth the curse, Gal. iii. 10, how much more he that goeth against the full scope, which is to love the Lord with all his heart, mind, and strength?

*Use* 1. This teacheth many a man what he may expect from God for his service he doth to him; not a blessing, as he hopes and flatters himself, but a curse, because what he doth, in what part of it soever, he knows well, and God knows better, that it is not as he is able, neither for the faculties of his mind, for the powers of his body, nor for the portion of his estate. For the body, many a man and many a woman pretend they are not able to sit so long as the public prayers and service of God are in hand, or they cannot stand and endure thrusts and heat, their bodies are weak and sickly; when they know, and God knows better than themselves, that they can sit longer about a matter of pleasure or pride, when they can endure more thrusting and heat for a matter of profit. They have a male in their flock, and offer to the Lord a corrupt thing; they are deceivers, saith the prophet, and from the mouth of the Lord accursed; for their minds, they pretend they are not able to sit attentively without sleeping in prayer or hearing, they are not able to conceive of the things delivered, they are not bookish to understand what they pray, but mean well; they have no memories to keep that is good when they have heard, whenas they know, and God knows better, that they, as Bernard speaketh (*tractatu de gradibus humilitatis*), can *vigilare in lecto*, when they do *dormire in choro*, they can, as Micah ii. 1, 'Devise iniquity upon their beds,' or as they, Prov. iv. 16, 'Who sleep not unless they have done wickedness,' or as the shepherds, Luke ii. who watched in the night for their own flock, that they have wit and skill at will for the world, which if they would cause their ear to hear, as Solomon speaketh, and set themselves to it, might conceive, and their memories are able to keep evil things; whenas one chest will hold gold as well as iron, if it were put in, and one wax the impression of a golden seal, as well as of lead. These have a male, &c., for their state; they pretend they are not able to give more than they do, which is little, God wot, to the poor, or to the church and maintenance of God's worship, whenas they know, and God knows, they can bestow much more on their pleasures, on harlots, and wicked persons; oftener feasting sycophants, flatterers, and lewd persons, than the members of Christ. Some that have borne place, being known to have had more players, the corrupters of youth, and oftener at their table than they had the poor and preachers, the converters of souls, and their ability would bear that well enough. These have a male, &c; and that shall be true, Isa. xxix. 15, 16, 'Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, for their works are in darkness, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Your turning of devices, shall it not be esteemed as the potter's clay; for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or the

thing formed say of him that fashioned it, He had no understanding? The world sees it, and mocks, and jests, at it; God sees it, and will judge it. These are deceivers and dissemblers of the world, and one day shall be uncased, when to their sorrow they shall hear the curse.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to labour against this deceitful dealing with God, whereby he shall but deceive himself, and cannot deceive God himself, because he shall lose that he looks for, not God, who seeth and knoweth everything, and, Gal. vi. 7, 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' If Jacob was afraid when he went about to seek a blessing, lest his blind father Isaac should discern him and his deceit in dealing with him, and so he might get a curse where he thought to have had a blessing, Gen. xxvii. 12, how ought men to take heed and fear to dissemble or deal deceitfully with God, even the all-seeing God, but to serve him with the best things we have, for faculties of mind, &c. Let us be Abels, and not Cains, Gen. iv., if we would be blessed with the one, and not accursed with the other, serve him with our best affections, best spirits, best time, best instruments. David was at a great *quære* with himself: Ps. cxvi. 12, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' as thinking he had nothing good enough; so should we think and so perform, that we may be blessed and escape the curse.

Now it is said, he is accursed that hath a male and offereth a corrupt thing; if he have it not, the curse is not belonging to him, but God will accept that he hath.

*Doct.* They who are God's, when they serve him, though they ought to bring males unto him, that is, that which is perfect; yet if they have it not, and are able to bring nothing but that which is imperfect, God will accept it notwithstanding, as it is here; so Micah vii. 18, and Mal. iii. 17, Num. xxiii. 21, 1 Kings xv. 5, James v. 11, and yet Job iii.

*Reason* 1. Because of that, 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that a man hath not.' God respects the mind more than the gift, as in the widow's mite, and the cup of water; so doth he the mind rather than the service, for it profits not him, nor he stands in no need of it. And the willing mind is, that a man with all his heart would do more if he were able, which God seeing, he accepts that they have.

*Reason* 2. Because they condemn and dislike their imperfections themselves, and judge themselves for them; then, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'If we should judge ourselves, we should not be judged;' yea, as Rom. vii. 17, while they thus condemn it, it is not accounted theirs; as Bernard of envy. Thou feelest it, but agreest not to it; it is such a passion as God one day will heal in thee, but not condemn thee for.

*Use.* It affords comfort against the temptations of Satan, who sets forward our discouragement for the little good we do.

*And voweth and offereth, or sacrificeth a corrupt thing.* The second part of their deceit; they made great show and promise of great things they would do, but they repented themselves, and they omit them altogether, or perform them very corruptly.

*Doct.* He that dealeth deceitfully in the Lord's service and worship, that is, maketh great shows and promises of great duties of piety, but after when he finds it more costly or painful, or crossing to his affections than he thought of, repents and doth it not, or doth it carelessly and corruptly, when he looks for a blessing, shall find a curse; so here, and Deut. xxiii. 21, Num. xxx. 3, 6, Eccles. v. 3, 4, 5, Mat. xxi. 28–32, Acts v.

*Reason* 1. Because he robs and spoils God, as it were taking or keeping from him that which is his; for, vowing it to God, he hath put it from himself, made an alienation of it, put it out of his own right into God's, whereas it was his own before, Acts v. 4.

*Reason* 2. Because they serve not God but themselves, as children who can be content to please their parents in things liking unto themselves, but not in other; please themselves, not their parents, so in this; and shew that they prefer all those things before God, which to keep, they will break promise with him.

This may teach many men that they may justly look for the curses of God upon them and theirs, if they be not upon them already, because they have so often vowed and promised great care and diligence in the service and fear of God, and performed very little or none at all to him; sometime in health, sometime in sickness, sometime in danger, sometime in deliverance, they promised great things unto the Lord, but they have played the cozeners with him. It was but to serve their own turn for the present, nothing they have performed, or nothing as they ought and promised. To say nothing of necessary vows, how carelessly they are found every way performed, as the vow of baptism, when men live more like infidels than Christians, at the best but as Jews, resting in the outward ceremony; or but outwardly civil and honest, never labour for any inward sanctification, any sincere holiness, any conscience of God's will; offer fleeces for the flesh, and skin for the beast: the vow of parents promising to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, as was commanded, Eph. vi. 4; but they take only care for the body, not for the soul, and to engraft God's fear in them. Such as Augustine confessed to God his father was, who troubled not himself, saith he, how I prospered in thy service, or how chaste I were, only his care was that I might be eloquent, and learn to speak well;* so they for worldly

* Qualis crescerem tibi, aut quàm castus, dummodò essem disertus ut discerem sermonem facere quàm optimum et persuadere dictione.—*Aug.*

things. Thirdly, the vow of married parties, who made a covenant before God, and to him, Prov. ii. 17, which is broken by many means, amongst many who think the covenant unviolated, if they commit it not outwardly and actually; whenas wanton words, and looks, and lusts break it.

To say nothing of these, for which many have either the curses of God, or have them hanging over their heads, but voluntary vows; men in some trouble or sickness renew their vow of obedience, as Israel, Hosea vi. 1, 2, but when that is once past, either they do not care for keeping it, or think they are discharged well enough, if they do a few days hear the word, or perform some one or two good duties, and after give over again, unlike David, Ps. cxix. 106, 112. The prophet tells them they are accursed, better it had been for them never to have vowed it at all; for though without it it is a sin, yet now it is the greater sin.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to take heed how he vows anything unto God, for often in the vow he may deserve God's curse, and often in the breaking it. In the vow, *first*, when it is of unlawful things, Acts xxiii. 12, then it is the bond of iniquity; *secondly*, when the party vowing is not able to perform it, either simply, or not without a sin, as popish single life, Mat. xix. 11; *thirdly*, when a party vowing is an inferior, and doth it without the consent, or contrary to the mind of the superior, Num. xxx. 6, 9; so papish children, contrary to parents' minds, enter their rules; *fourthly*, when it hindereth a man from the duties of his calling, as those who leave their calling and goods to profess wilful poverty, or become friars mendicant, 1 Cor. vii. 22; *fifthly*, when there is put holiness in it, and it is made meritorious. If it be faulty in these or any the like, then is sin committed in the making of it, and so a curse followeth it; but if not, then the curse followeth the breaking of it. When then it is so hard a thing to vow, and not to have sin cleave to it, if there be any fear of sin, there will be rashness avoided in it; and if there be any fear of the curse, they will not be so rash, lest they provoke God, Eccles. v. 1.

*Use* 3. To teach every man, when he hath vowed, to be very careful for the performance of it, and let neither cost nor labour, profit nor pleasure hinder him, for he shall lose more by the breaking of it than he can gain. The sin of breaking a man's vow or promise ought to make men afraid to do it. Men fear perjury and abhor it; this is no less, if Christ may be believed, Mat. v. 33. But if not the sin, yet the curse, and to avoid it make good that thou hast spoken to God. I suppose many men in the time and heat of the sickness vowed great things to God, if they were preserved, and if God would return in mercy to the city, that they might in safety follow their callings again; for I cannot think but that most men, specially when God came anything nigh them, were affected and touched for the present, which usually brings forth such thoughts and such motions. If any were not, I think their case is marvellous fearful, to be in the fire and no relenting. Then you that did, remember your vows, and see where is the performance of them; it may be sought for, but not easily seen, or seen in a very few. And what is to be expected but these curses, and more heavy than we have had! If your children or servants, all the time you are correcting of them, and holding the rod over them, promise to learn their books better, and do their work more diligently, whereupon you spare them; if they after deal deceitfully with you, will not your displeasure be doubled, and your anger be increased, and you think lawfully too? Think God's ways are more equal and just. If thou wouldest avoid this, then do as David said and did: Ps. lxvi. 13, 14, 'I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings; and I will pay my vows, which my lips have promised, and my mouth hath spoken in my affliction.' If a man vow when he is in custody or restraint, that when he getteth liberty, he will go and dwell in a place where the word is; if the word go from thence, he is not bound, Ruth i. 16, 17. Again, in cases of necessity, as a man bound to abstain from wine, yet if physicians counsel it for his health, he may use it, as Jer. xxxv. 11; yet so, as he have a special eye to the main end for which his vow was made, as suppose Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 23, to abstain, yet for his often infirmities he may drink.

*For I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts.* There is God's first reason, why they ought not to corrupt his worship, and deal thus deceitfully with him; his greatness and power, who is able to punish them for evil doing.

*Doct.* Men ought to obey God, and to avoid evil and corruption, as generally and in all things, so in his worship, for fear of his power and justice, *vide* ver. 6, 'where is my fear?'

*And a great king.* It is the kingdom of power, not grace; he by his power is absolute king, great, and the greatest.

*Doct.* The Lord he is the absolute king of all men and angels, and all creatures in the world, they are all his subjects; so is he here called a king, and that, 2 Chron. xx. 6, Dan. ii. 21. This his commanding of all creatures sheweth, and their obeying, Ps. civ. 4, Isaiah xxxvii., Joshua x. 12, 13, Exod. xiv. 21, Mat. viii. 26, Dan. iii. 6.

*Reason* 1. Because he hath created and doth sustain all, it is reason he should be their king, and they his subjects.

*Reason* 2. Because else there would be no order, but all confusion, Lactantius (*de falsa religione*, lib. i. cap. 3) he gives this as a reason for the order of things, because there is but one God that governs all. For as in an army, if there were as many generals as there are bands, companies, and wings of the battle,

it could neither be instructed nor governed, because every one would stand upon his own wisdom and counsel, and such dissension would rather hurt than profit. So in this world, if there were multitudes of governors, if God were not the sole king and governor, there would be nothing but confusion and disorder.

*Use.* Uses of this we have before, ver. 4, 'The Lord of hosts.'

## CHAPTER II.

*And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear it, nor consider it in your heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not consider it in your heart. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and cast dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and you shall be like unto it. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant, which I made with Levi, might stand, saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave him fear, and he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and there was no inquity found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But ye are gone out of the way; ye have caused many to fall by the law; ye have broken the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore have I also made you to be despised and vile before all the people, because ye kept not my ways, but have been partial in the law. Have we not all one father? hath not one God made us? why do we transgress every one against his brother, and break the covenant of our fathers? Judah hath transgressed, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: for Judah hath defiled the holiness of the Lord, which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The Lord will cut off the man that doth this, both the master and the servant, out of the tabernacle of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts. And this have ye done again, and covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with mourning; because the offering is no more regarded, neither received acceptably at your hands. Yet ye say, Wherein? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast transgressed, yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? yet had he abundance of spirit. And wherefore one? Because he sought a godly seed. Therefore keep yourselves in your spirit, and let none trespass against the wife of his youth. If thou hatest her, put her away, saith the Lord God of Israel; yet he covereth the injury under his garment, saith the Lord of hosts; therefore keep yourselves in your spirit, and transgress not. Ye have wearied the Lord with your words: yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?*

VER. 1. *And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.*

The parts of this chapter are curses and judgments, threatened against, 1, the priests; 2, the people. In the first verse is noted the preface to the priests.

He applieth his doctrine to the priests.

*Doct.* It is the duty of the minister, not only to teach general doctrine, but to deliver that which may concern every man, and every state and condition of men, specially being his auditory and charge, to apply things to several estates of men; so is it here, as Rom. xiii. 7. So, reproof to whom reproof, judgment, mercy, encouragement, or terror to whom it is due and belongs, Ezek. iii. 17–20.

*Reason* 1. Because he is the Lord's steward of his household, to dispose to all his servants their due portion: 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2, 'Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.'

*Reason* 2. Because if they deal thus faithfully, their reward shall be great at the coming of their Lord and Master. If otherwise, their recompence shall be fearful, Luke xii. 42–47.

*Use* 1. To condemn those who teach only general things, general duties of Christianity, or general points; and speak, as it were, in the clouds, never applying the doctrine to any particular, to no men, no conditions, no state; who deal so, as civil honest men would be ashamed to do, defraud men of their portion. In the ages wheresoever they lived, they would be accounted the best ministers, and the only men; but being unfaithful servants, Luke xii. 46, 'The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.'

*Use* 2. To stop their mouths who say, The minister is beside his text, if he speak and apply anything in particular to men's particular states and callings. It is a strange thing men can endure that for the body they cannot for the soul; nay, that which for the body is complained of, as dishonest and unfaithful when it is not done, they cry out of it, if it be done to the

soul. In the body, for the health of it, men can endure, not only prescription, but application of physic; yea, of sharp, bitter, and biting things. If they send for a physician who feels their pulse, discerneth their urine, and conceiveth of their disease, and yet fall only to discourse of the excellentness of physic, and other diseases, and never come anything to theirs at all, they would haply judge him a great scholar, but no wise man, nor fit for a physician, and haply call in question his fidelity. But for the soul, if the spiritual physician apply anything, if it have any sharpness in it, if being with them, and living among them, and seeing their estate, he touch them, and apply it to them, he is accounted no wise man, haply a busy and indiscreet fellow. The physician takes not the way to save their bodies, and he is cried out on: the minister takes the way to save their souls, and he is cried out of. The physician that will prescribe, and see his patient take it, and come to see how it works with him, is much commended for his honesty, care, and fidelity; but if the minister do the like, he is busy and meddling; but he that will please men, is not the servant of Christ. And these must know, when he deals with their particular sins, out of a general text, he hath his warrant enough, such as shall acquit him.

*Use* 3. To teach the hearer to endeavour to apply that he heareth delivered to himself, and to learn what is for him, and that to apply to himself; for if the minister, 2 Tim. ii. 15, must study to approve himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, dividing the word aright, then shall the hearer approve himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, receiving the word aright. They must therefore apply it to themselves. The minister's application may discharge himself, but not profit them, unless they will apply and keep it. The patient, if he take not, and endeavour to keep the potion prescribed and brought, by smelling of vinegar or the like, labouring against the bad humours of the stomach, shall have little profit by the physic, but rather hurt; so it is in this, they must hear all, and labour to retain all; but learn that especially which concerns themselves, places, and conditions. One man should not so greedily receive that which toucheth another man, and let pass that which is to him, or apply that to others which is to himself, but every man that which is for himself. He never proves a good scholar which is busy to learn other of his fellows' lessons, and neglecteth his own; nor he a good Christian that can take out other men's duties, and not his own, not know what is for him.

*O ye priests.* It may seem he goeth too far in dealing with the priests, who were the greatest men the time had, except their ruler, who then was no king, and Malachi but a mean man, as other the prophets were, and yet he dealeth with the priests, not excepting the high priest himself. Besides, this corruption was the personal fault of the people, and the priests might excuse themselves, as not to be reproved for other men's faults; yet he deals with them.

*This commandment is for you.* The reason why they are reproved, because the charge hereof was by God laid on them. God had commanded them to look to this; he is thought by this, to cut off every excuse which might be made against his reproof, either why they have not done it, or why hereafter they should not do it. As for the people, they might say, they were bare with their long journey and cost of building, and they were grown old, and if they were not tolerated thus to do, they would bring nothing at all, and his worship would fall to the ground. The prophet answereth, that God hath commanded, and therefore they are to do it, whatsoever come of it.

*Doct.* Whatsoever God commandeth men, or calleth them to, that they must obey and do; whatsoever inconvenience may follow of it, they must shut their eyes against them all, and put their hand into God's hand, to be led by him whithersoever he will; so with these. Abraham obeyed God to go out of his own country when God called him, not objecting the inconveniences, Gen. xii. 4; and when to offer up Isaac, not objecting, as he might, if he had consulted with flesh and blood, infinite things against it, Gen. xxii. Hereto is that Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24, Lev. xxv. 20, Gal. i. 16.

*Reason* 1. Because all inconveniences in the world will not excuse the fact, man's disobedience; it may sometime lessen it in man's reason, but not defend it in God's judgment.

*Reason* 2. Because God is able either to take away those inconveniences, or to make them turn to his own glory, and the advantage of man, who in a sincere conscience doth obey him. And he will do so; as in Daniel, and the three children.

*Use* 1. To reprove all those who refuse to obey those things they are taught and shewed, that God hath commanded, because of some inconveniences they foresee will follow. They shall haply be debarred of their pleasure, or deprived of their profit, or be discountenanced of great ones, or derided of inferiors; therefore they will not be religious, nor professors, nor reform their manners, nor be careful of their lives, and seek to make conscience of their ways, as if God cannot bring these upon them for evil, as well and more than man for good. Or as if these had not befallen men in their disobedience, as well as those who have obeyed him. As if these can excuse a man when he shall come before the judge, or he shall not be stripped naked of them all, and be left alone to answer for his disobedience. Men are taught they ought to deal plainly and truly with others in weight and measure, to speak truth, and not to lie, and such like. They see then they shall not grow rich as others, and be esteemed of as others, as they think; and, therefore, they choose rather by such means to grow rich, than to obey God; as if their coming into the world was

only to get riches, and not to honour and obey God. Teach them to be liberal unto the poor for good causes, and to make them friends with the riches of iniquity, Luke x. 9, and that God will give them use for it, they will answer or think as the widow of Sarepta did, 1 Kings xvii., they have little enough for themselves and theirs, and they fear to want before they die, or not to leave enough for theirs, as if that they left behind them were theirs, and not rather that they sent before. As princes have more use of that they send by their harbingers, than of what they leave in their standing houses, so should they have more profit by that they give before, than that they leave behind. Persuade them to make restitution of that they have wrongfully taken from men, or else God will not justify them but condemn them, Micah vi. 10, 11; they see they shall call their names in question, they pretend slandering of the gospel. To these I say, Saul disobeyed God, as he pretended, to sacrifice to God, or to have that he might, and not for private use; but it excused him not, he lost his kingdom for it. Let them take heed they lose not the kingdom they say they hope and look for.

*Use* 2. To teach every man, when he hath a commandment of God, to obey, and not to cast at the inconveniences to hinder himself from obeying; for he that will look at such things shall be like him, Eccles. xi. 4, 'He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap;' he shall neither sow any obedience, nor reap any reward. If he see no inconvenience imminent, and obey, it is not much worth; for he pleaseth himself rather than God; but if there be, it is the more acceptable. As disobedience in small things is more offensive, because the obedience was easy; so obedience in great things, and when there are great inconveniences, is more acceptable, because it is harder. Therefore, if God command, we must shew ourselves the children of Abraham, and of the faithful. What though inconveniences will follow? what though the world shall condemn us, and the wicked flout us, and the devil and our own flesh set themselves against us? Deny thyself, as Abraham did, and thine own reason; dispute not of the commandment of God, but obey, and commit the event to God. Worthy is that saying of Luther,* to be written in the tables of our hearts: He that hath God's word for what he doth in any calling, let him believe and go boldly on, and no doubt God will give a good issue. If God command them, and they see great inconvenience, pass and mount over them all by thy faith, as Abraham did, and believe, Gen. xxii. 8. God will give an evasion, and thou shalt have occasion to say, ver. 14, 'In the mount the Lord will provide.' And as Philo, when he pleaded the cause of his nation, being brought to a great exigent, before Caligula, said, It cannot be but that God's aid is near, when all men's help faileth us.

*This commandment is for you.* The care of God's service, to see it be done as it ought, to direct the people, to reprove their corruption, to refine their corrupt offerings, belongeth to the minister, of which I have spoken in the former chapter.

Ver. 2. *If ye will not hear it, nor consider it in your heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not consider it in your heart.*

*If ye will not hear it.* In the matter of this curse we consider, first, the exception, which is triple, to hear, and apply, and give glory to God. The sum is, repentance; unless they will consider things well, and enter into their hearts, and return to do things worthy their place, and fitting their calling, these things must come upon them; so that without this, these must come, nothing can hinder it.

*Doct.* 1. There is no means to keep away or turn away God's judgments, but repentance: Rev. ii. 5, 'Except thou repent.'

In the particulars, the first is, to hear; they were the ministers of the assemblies, such as were able to teach others, why should they hear? or what need of hearing? Yet they must hear.

*Doct.* 2. They who have knowledge and understanding of the word of God, and the mysteries of salvation, ought still to hear it from others; hence it is required of these. And hereto belongs the often rehearsing of that sentence; 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,' as often in the Gospel, and Mat. xiii. 9, 43; 1 Peter ii. 2; Heb. vi. 1; Acts xiii. 42, 43, and xvii. 32.

*Reason* 1. Because, by this means, there may be added to their knowledge, faith and the persuasion of their heart of those things they know and conceive in the brain; and so they may have a sanctified knowledge and a conscience of the practice of things they know, Rom. x. 17.

*Reason* 2. To bring to mind those things which they know and believe, for they often forget or think not of them, even then when they have most occasion either to practise or to receive benefit and comfort by them, 2 Peter i. 12; either natural forgetfulness or passion hinders. As in a great disease, a physician himself may have oblivion of his art and the things good for him.

*Reason* 3. To stir up their affections, and to work upon them to the greater love of good things and hatred of evil, even of particular sins, 2 Pet. i. 13, 2 Tim. i. 6.

*Use.* To teach men to examine themselves hereby after hearing, and as often as they hear, whether they are good hearers or no, which is not only if they have got more knowledge than they had, and gone away

* Qui habet certum Dei verbum in quacunque vocatione, credat tantum et audeat, et dabit Deus, haud dubito, secundos exitus.—*Luther.*

more wise, as a scholar from his master; but if they have their hearts more fully persuaded of the promises of the gospel, and say with the Samaritans, John iv. 44, 'We now more believe, having heard Christ himself.' As they who, having a promise of a prince of some great matters, or the relation of some great good done for them, at the second or third hearing of it are made more joyful and more stedfast to believe it, so with them; if they find themselves put in mind of many duties they knew before; but affection blinded them and passion overcame them, and now make more conscience of the practice of them. As they who knew some meat dangerous to their health, yet affection would not let them abstain; after they have heard a physician speak, go away with resolution to be more careful of their diet; yea, their hearts are inflamed with a greater love of good things, with more zeal for the glory of God, with more hatred of sin, who go away, as Naaman the Syrian did from the prophet, with a resolution to serve no god but the God of heaven; not his old gods, his belly, or his purse, or his lust, the world, sin, or any other.

*Nor consider it in your heart.* The second thing in the exception, the considering of that they have heard. The word is *put* or *lay* it upon your heart, an Hebraism signifying to attend diligently, and to set a man's heart upon that which is spoken, or to lay it surely up.

*Doct.* It is required that men do not only hear the word, but that they ponder and consider it, lay it up in their hearts, and set their hearts upon it, by marking, applying, and diligently meditating or recalling. To this purpose is Deut. vi. 6 and xi. 18, Ps. cxix. 11, Col. iii. 16.

*Reason* 1. Because it is a right treasure, and gold, Ps. xix. 10, Rev. ii., and therefore not only to be sought for as treasure, but to be laid up in the best and chiefest chest and treasury.

*Reason* 2. Because it is a sword whereby a man may defend himself and offend Satan, Eph. vi. 17. No man having his enemy always and in every corner lying in ambush for him, seeking to spoil him, will be without his sword, but carry it ever about with him.

*Reason* 3. Because it else will never be profitable unto them for salvation, nor fruitful in them to glorification; for if it be not engrafted in them, it will not save them, James i. 27; and if it take not root it cannot do it, no more than the seed that lieth upon the bad, stony, or thorny ground.

*Use* 1. This is to reprove all careless hearers, who hear and retain nothing, never lay it up; their memories are as sieves, whereout the water runs as fast as it comes in: Luke ii. 18, 19, 'And all that heard it wondered at the things that were told them of the shepherds, but Mary kept all those sayings, and pondered them in her heart.'

*Use* 2. To shew the reason why so little profit comes by the word; because it is heard but not kept, not laid up, often not received, either because it is a strange thing, Hosea viii. 12, or else because they are so full, that it is water poured upon a full vessel, and passeth all by; they are so full of their worldly pleasures and delights, profits and desires, or it stayeth not with them, as physic doth no good that is not kept; and to use Christ's comparison, Mat. xiii. 33, leaven put in, not hid, not remaining, makes no change.

*Use* 3. To persuade to hear with all diligence, and lay it up with all carefulness, and seek it may, as it were, take root in us: Heb. ii. 1, 'Wherefore we ought diligently to give heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.' James i. 21, 'Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of maliciousness, and receive with meekness the word that is grafted in you, which is able to save your souls;' the word that is *grafted* in you.

*To give glory unto my name.* Here is the third thing in this exception, to do things worthy or fitting their ministry or calling; they may thereby glorify his name, that is (this being made opposite to that which was in the former chapter of polluting his name), they may make his worship to be regarded and honoured. These priests must not only hear and lay up the word and commandment, but also obey and do it, if they will escape the curse and enjoy the blessing. And if they be careful in their place to reprove, teach, direct, to reject their corrupt sacrifices, then should his worship be uncorrupted and kept pure.

*Doct.* 1. Men must not only hear, and believe, and lay up the word of God, but they must draw it forth into obedience and practice, if they would escape the curse or enjoy the blessings either in this life or the life to come. So much here, and James i. 25, Rev. ii. 26, 'And keep my works.'

*Doct.* 2. The ministers of God, if they be careful in their places to instruct what men ought to do, to reprove when they offend, to direct them, and reject them and their sacrifices when they are not as they should be, God's worship will not be corrupt, but kept very holy and pure. So here. This is manifest by the dedication of the seven epistles to the churches, to the angels of them, because they being faithful, there would be no such carelessness and coldness; hence are the charges given to Timothy and Titus by St Paul, 1 Tim. v. 21 and 2 Tim. iv. 1, and that 2 Tim. ii. 2. All the time Eli was young, and able to look to the worship of God, being faithful, it was pure, and the offerings of God regarded, 1 Sam. i. 2; so of Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2; hence that Acts xx. 28, 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock whereof the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' Hence is that of Hegesippus in Eusebius, while the apostles lived, and they who heard Christ teaching, the church remained a pure and incorrupt virgin; but when that age was past, error and corruption was spread abroad.

*Reason* 1. Because, while they are faithful and watchful, the envious man will not sow his tares. They who have desire to corrupt the purity of doctrine and worship of God will not shew themselves, or obscurely or fearfully; and if they do, yet they will be soon pulled up and the growth of them prevented.

*Reason* 2. Because the people shall by their diligence be armed by instruction to discern and withstand corruption from without, and be excited against their own coldness and carelessness, which naturally would come upon them, as naturally men think anything too much, and everything good enough, for God's service, unless they have remembrancers to the contrary.

*Use* 1. Then most commonly, if not always, by the corruption and contempt of God's service and worship, we may gather the negligence, carelessness, and unfaithfulness of the ministry in every church, and *e contra*, for such people, such priests, such followers, such guides. Travellers will hardly go before their guide, but follow after him. It may sometime fall out otherwise; but that happeneth, as many a careful master hath corrupt servants, though he have never such care over them, because his neighbours do not carefully and straightly bring up theirs, so from the neighbour parishes; but where the ministers are jointly faithful, they have not that corruption which otherwise would be.

*Use* 2. To teach as many as desire and love the pure worship of God, that it may continue and not be corrupted, to do what is in them for their places and condition, that there may be continued a faithful and painful ministry. Private men to use private means, to pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust out still more and more labourers; others in their place to speak and advance laws and ordinances for that purpose; for if old and faithful Eli be any way disenabled, and his successors be Hophni and Phinehas, given to their bellies, to idleness, to profaneness, and yet they may carry it out as they, with little or no check, and not be compelled to other carriage, how shall not the offerings of God and his worship be contemned? If wolves be among the flocks, and the shepherds be asleep and watch them not by night, in season and out of season, how should they not be spoiled? The nature of man of itself will be careless enough of the service of God, how much more if they have corruptions, nay, if it want encouragers, but find bad and corrupt examples.

*Use* 3. To admonish the ministers, seeing that upon them depends the purity or corruption, the honour or contempt of the service of God, as they have a desire that he whose they are, whom they serve, and who hath taken them so nigh unto himself, may be honoured of his people, and have pure and holy worship performed unto him, so to be faithful and diligent in their places, to teach and instruct, to exhort and persuade men unto them. As they ought to give the Lord no rest for his people, being his remembrancers, so not them for him, being messengers; for if they be careless and negligent, as the people will grow corrupt, so they will like themselves in their corruption. For men who carry their sins away unrepented will take themselves not to sin, and so no glory should be given to his name. How unfaithful should that servant be, who, for sparing himself a little, will let his master's honour fall to the ground! So that minister. Be they as watchful as they can, they shall find that this corruption will seize upon men, and settle upon them if they wake them not; how much more, if they sleep, will the enemy sow tares?

*I will even send a curse upon you.* The curse in general, which is not for their sin so much as for their impenitency; for so the coherence sheweth, and this his long patience towards them.

*I will even send a curse.* For the contempt of his worship comes many plagues and curses upon men. *Vide* chap. i. 14.

*Upon you.* Though his priests, and dear to him, yet that would not save them.

*Doct.* No person can be free from the judgments of God if they sin, be they never so near unto him either in place or particular profession, or in general profession of his word, as it is manifest here; so Num. xx. 12, Lev. x. 1, 2, Eli and his sons, 1 Sam. iv. 2, 2 Sam. vi., Uzzah, Luke i. 18, 20, Acts v.

*Reason* 1. Because, when he cannot be sanctified in them he will be glorified, Lev. x. 3, that is, he will justify himself and his justice, when he spares not such as are nigh to him. For as it was the greater manifestation of Solomon's justice that he put a murderer to death, and a great one, Joab, so the more that he put him to death at the horns of the altar, 1 Kings ii. 31.

*Reason* 2. Because he might either purge their present condition, or prevent their future sins, and keep both them and others from presuming; what better means than sharp medicines, and severity and punishing? Deut. xiii. 11.

*Use* 1. Then, from the judgments of God upon men of a special or general profession, may not a man condemn the profession, because this proves the professors not to be such as they should be; as many are ready to condemn the ministry, and the profession of piety, from some judgments that happen unto them that are in the profession. Admit that the judgment argue the corruption, yet must it not condemn the profession or the place.* If you see an unworthy

* Si videris sacerdotem indignum, non ob id calumniari sacerdotium debes, neque enim calumnianda res est, sed ille solum meretur onerari convitiis, qui tanto bono abutatur. Non enim si Judas proditor fuit, hoc Apostolicæ professionis crimen, sed unius tantum viri mens improba fuit: et medici quidem multi carnifices sunt, qui pro medelis venenum propinant, nec tamen artem vituperо, sed qui arte sua iniquus

priest, you may not presently slander the priesthood, but him who abuses it. If Judas were a traitor, it was his own fault, and not to be laid to the apostolical profession. Many physicians are murderers, who poison instead of curing, yet I condemn not the art but such as abuse it; many mariners make shipwreck, yet we condemn not the art of navigation, but their badness; and men's minds, who, in such things must needs be occupied, should rather exercise themselves to meditate of the justice of God, and to justify him that spares not sin, no, not in those who are most nigh unto him, giving a purgation, as it were, to his own house, as David said he would do to his, Ps. ci.; and laying the fault where it is, not upon the profession, but the person. In this Job's friends were better than many, who of the two, when they could not sound the depth of God's dealing, they accused him rather than his profession, that he had been but an hypocrite in it; and as not another's profession, so never his own, where he finds God's judgments in it. As many men draw near to God, and take some holy profession upon them, and think then all should be safe with them, and then fear nothing, which, when it befalleth unto them, begin to contemn their profession, as the Jews, Jer. xliv. 15–18; so they. But as the Jews never considered their present corrupt service of God, nor their by-past corruption and idolatry unrepented of, ver. 21, whereby they might have seen that it came upon them for that, not for their profession; so with these.

*Use* 2. To teach all, who draw near to the Lord, either by some special office in the church, or profession of his word, not for that to presume to live in any sin, as if that should be his sanctuary; for if others have been smitten, as it were, at the horns of the altar, why should he think to escape? Nay, he shall the less escape than another further from God, because he hath these examples, and hath not feared; nay, he ought the rather to labour for more holiness the nearer he comes to God, and to avoid even the less corruptions,* for the Lord will less bear it in them, for he will be sanctified in them that draw near unto him, if not by their holiness, yet by his own justice in punishing them more sharply, to the end, that as the wax, the more nearer it approacheth to the fire, so much more the heat of the fire approacheth in melting of it, so the holiness of God may better be known in uncasing of such hypocrites, or hypocrisy approaching to him, and so he may be the more glorified of the people in such judgments.

*And will curse your blessings.* The first particular curses, in cursing their blessings already bestowed on them, which is either by taking from them the power they have to nourish, and he hath by his ordinance given unto them, or else so that they shall not be comfortable unto them, or else in making them turn to their hurt.

*Doct.* 1. Then doth God curse men, when they have abundance of outward things, and have not the comfort by them, which happens either by his taking away the staff from the creature, or the strength from the eater: Micah vi. 14, 'Thou shalt eat and not be satisfied.'

*Doct.* 2. All creatures have the power to help, nourish, and comfort man, and to preserve his life, not of themselves, but from God and his blessing. Meat without him are fitter to choke than feed, as clay to put out eyes, John xi., rather than to give sight.

*Use* 1. This teacheth why the rich, as well as the poor, must pray, 'Give us the day,' &c.; and those who have abundance, as well as those who want.

*Use* 2. Not to trust and rely upon them, when we have them, and use them, for, Luke xii. 15, 'A man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.'

*Use* 3. Not to fear or distrust when our means are never so small, nay, wanting; because he that can *by* the means, can also help *without* them, where he hath himself denied them, and man not by his fault deprived himself of them: so much is that of Mat. iv. 4, 7. There is another remedy in the hand of God, who, though he give not food, can prolong the life of man with his beck and will, and word only. He that could make the garments of the Israelites last longer than by reason, or in their nature they could, can make the life of man, which is more excellent, to last.

*Yea, I have cursed them already.* An amplification or confirmation by way of correction, shewing how they had not profited by his judgments, though they were upon them, and had been long.

*Doct.* The judgments of God profit not the wicked, but rather of themselves make them worse; they benefit not by them, but grow worse and worse; they diminish not their sins, but add to them. The experience of all times in the church sheweth it, Isa. i. 6, Jer. v. 3, Pharaoh and his servants, Saul and his court.

*Reason* 1. Because they are ignorant and blind, not knowing who smite them, nor why, neither the author, nor the end, nor the cause. Like the purblind Philistines, 1 Sam. vi. 9, who would rather impute it to chance than the hand of God, and so think some other cause than their sin, and some other end than their forsaking their sin.

*Reason* 2. Because they are like to the servant in the law, Exod. xxi. 5, 6, that when he should have gone out free, yet so loved his wife and children, that he would remain a servant for ever, and with a public disgrace. So these love their sins, that they had rather be servants still, and under affliction and judgments, then part with their sins, which makes them impute that they suffer to anything rather than their

abutitur: et nautæ quamplures navigia amiserunt, nec ars navigandi tamen, sed eorum perversa voluntas, jure damnanda. —*Chrysostom.*

* 1 Peter iv. 17, And for profession, as Salvian, of a particular sin, yea, of all Licet gravè in omnibus, præcipuè in iis tamen quæ in consimili crimine etiam professio sanctitatis accusat.

sins, find out some other causes and so blind themselves. Like men, when they have surfeited of some meat, when the physician comes to them, had rather hazard their health, than tell him what is the cause, lest he should forbid it them.

*Use* 1. To put a difference betwixt the good and bad, God's children and the wicked, who often happen into the same judgment and affliction together, as chaff and wheat into the same sieve, gold and dross into the same furnace, yet are they diversely affected in it and by it. God's children are made the better, more near heaven, more holy. As trees when they are pruned and lopped from their water boughs, do grow higher, and bring forth fruit more plentifully; so he increaseth the more, and is more excellent. As the ark of Noah, the more the waters of the flood increased, the higher it was carried, and came nearer to heaven; so they. But the wicked are more hardened, as the smith's anvil or stithy.

*Use* 2. This may teach us, that nothing but the word is able to win men unto God, and to bring them out of their sins and corruption. The benefits and the blessings God bestoweth upon men, and the judgments and curses he layeth upon them, may prevail with a man already converted, as he that knows the use and end of all, but not before, Deut. xxxii. 15, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. They may prepare men for the word, they may open the ear that a man shall attend to the word, Job xxxiii. 16; they may, as fire, make a man pliable for the hammer of the word, that it may work upon them, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13, 18.

*Use* 3. To teach men, not by their affliction, but by the fruit of their affliction to discern themselves, whether God's people or no: Isaiah xxvii. 9, 'And this is all the fruit, the taking away of his sin.'

*Doct.* 1. God's judgments not regarded, men not profiting by them, they are forerunners of greater, warning-pieces of more fearful plagues, Hosea v. 12–14, Amos iv. 2, 11, Isa. ix. 12–14, Lev. xxvi. 18, 21.

*Because ye do not consider it in your heart.* The reason of this curse, because they had not applied themselves to the word, and it to them, but had rejected it, and made light by it.

*Doct.* 2. When the word, and admonitions by the word, are rejected, then followeth the rod of God upon their backs: Micah vi. 9, 'Hear the rod.'

Ver. 3. *Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and cast dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts, and you shall be like unto it.*

*Behold, I will corrupt your seed.* The future judgments prophesied of, two in this verse, famine and reproach. Thus hath God decreed to punish those; but before he will execute, he makes it known to the prophet, and tells him what he will do.

*Doct.* 1. When the Lord purposeth to bring a judgment upon his people, he communicates his counsels with his prophets and ministers.

*I will corrupt your seed.* The first judgment in this verse is, famine; for the seed corrupted that it can bring forth no fruit, must make that, must cause famine.

*Doct.* 2. For the iniquities of a land and people, the Lord will lay dearth and famine upon them, even for their sin, and for this in special, for contempt of his worship and word; so here, and 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, Lev. xxvi. 19, 20, Ps. cvii. 34, Ezek. v. 16, 17, Amos iv. 4–6, and viii. 8, 13.

*Reason* 1. Because this, when many other things prevails not, is a means to make men retire, and return to God by repentance. As the instance in the prodigal son, Luke xv. 16, 17.

*Reason* 2. Because, as St Chrysostom speaks, they who blaspheme God, deserve not the use of those creatures which glorify him; because the son which reproaches his father, is unworthy of the ministry of servants.*

*Reason* 3. Because it is just with God to starve their bodies, who, by the contempt of the word, starve their own souls, as Haggai i. 4. God called for a famine upon the people, because they contemned his house, and decked their own; so in this, the soul being his perpetual house, where he would dwell for ever, and their bodies their own clay houses and momentary.

*Use* 2. To inform men's judgments, who, when such judgments are upon them, do ascribe them to second causes, as to the wind and weather, to the disposition of heavens and earth, or to the cruelty of men in hoarding up and making a dearth, as the sick often imputeth his disease to his meat, or bad diet, or taking the cold, and such like, and never to their sins, as the cause of it. These may be the means, and so thought of; and as in health and prosperity there is somewhat to be given to them as means, so in this. But the principal is their sins, thus provoking God, thus shutting heaven and opening it against them; either by drought making a dearth, as in Judea, or by moisture making a famine, as in England, or howsoever else it comes, yet the cause of it is man's sins, and the iniquities of the people; out of the church, sins against honesty and the second table; and in the church, both those, and sins against the first table, contempt of God's worship and word.

*Use* 2. To teach us in our land and time what we may expect, as by the course of God's dealing, adding famine to pestilence, before he bring the sword and other destructions. As princes do with rebels in a walled town, or entrenched in a fence, cut off their provision and victuals to make them yield; so the sins of the time abounding, as it was prophesied of the latter times, and the contempt of the word being marvellous great amongst us, even among all sorts of all degrees, if it was just with God, for sending a famine

* Indigni sunt uti creaturis Deum glorificantibus ipsum blasphemantes, quoniam filius contumelia patrem afficiens, servorum ministerio fungi non est dignus.—*Chrysost. Hom.* 25 *ad pop. Antioch.*

upon Israel three years, year after year, for breaking their faith with the Gibeonites, and not regarding their word they had passed to them, 2 Sam. xxi. 1, what will it be with God to send it so upon us, who have so often broken faith with him, and contemned his word and his promise? Are not they unworthy of the creatures of God, which glorify him not in their places, who do daily blaspheme his name and word, and make it to be evil spoken of? Are such sons as contemn their father and regard not his command, unworthy of the help of any of his servants? Let us sit judges in the general, and we will give sentence against others that it is so. To us Nathan the prophet speaketh, We are the men. Therefore, what expect we else, nay, what can we expect better? And if we have not been bettered by God's hand, as Daniel called the pestilence, it is better we fall into the mercy of insensible creatures than into the cruelty of unreasonable men.

*Use* 3. To direct men, when they are under such a judgment, and God sends cleanness of teeth and scarceness of bread, not to quarrel with the means, and complain of this and that, but for a man to quarrel with his own sins, and consult not with flesh and blood, which will make him accuse the means, but with the oracle of God, which will make him accuse himself, and let him see where the sin is, that it may be reproved, and he humbled, and the land cured. David took this course, though it was long before he did it, to inquire of the Lord the cause of their famine in the end of the third year, and understanding why it was, and that the satisfying of the Gibeonites.

*I will corrupt.* The word signifies to rebuke, *i. e.* I will with a word of my mouth destroy it.

*Doct.* God is able with his bare word to bring judgment and destruction upon a whole land and people; if he but speak the word, they shall soon come to nought and perish. He that is powerful in the voice of the people, by the sound of rams' horns, to the overthrow of the walls of Jericho, Joshua vi., can be powerful by his own word to overthrow whom he will. Or thus, it is as easy for the Lord to punish and destroy men, as it is for man to speak a word, Jer. xviii. 6, 7, Ps. civ. 29.

*Reason* 1. Because he made all things with ease and with his own word, Gen. i. Now, it is a far lesser thing to destroy thousands than to make one. A man can more easily overthrow whole cities in shorter time than build one house; sooner sink a navy than make one ship.

*Reason* 2. Because he is Lord over all, and hath all creatures at his command, being Lord of hosts. Now, how easy it is for princes to destroy their enemies, or those they hate and are displeased withal, when they are of a great command.

*Use* 1. To teach men not to rely or put confidence in man or any creature. There is in itself that which might keep men from it, being well thought of and considered; because they are in themselves mortal and mutable, very uncertain and deceitful. But more, when this comes to be considered, that God can so easily destroy them, with a word, or blowing upon them, which to trust and put confidence in them, will certainly procure him to do; and, which done, will make a man marvellously ashamed that he hath put any confidence in them.

*Use* 2. To let us see the fearful condition and the danger wherein they stand, who live, by reason of their corruptions and iniquities, out of the favour of God, who can easily destroy them and the things they have or are beloved of them, with a word, with a blast. If it be so in respect of men to live out of the favours of kings and princes, who have their limited powers, who are but men, and have their breath in their nostrils, as they have, what is it to be out of God's favour, by whose breath they stand and live, and who, withdrawing his breath, they come to nothing? If he be so able, why doth he so suffer them? It is from the abundance of his patience, not want of power, which abused by them, increaseth his wrath and their sins, and will make that he will come the more suddenly and heavily upon them. The heavier the weight is that is hung at the clock, the wheels run swifter, and the hammers strike sooner and smarter.

*Use* 3. To teach every man to take heed how they offend or displease God, as they love themselves, or anything they have, seeing he can so easily destroy both one and other. Men are apt to make the power of great men either a bridle to restrain them from offending, or a spur to make them do the things they command, even when they are unlawful; for who are we, say they, to withstand so great men? Were their faith as good as their sense, they might see there were cause to say so of God, and would know it is a far more fearful thing to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men.

*And cast dung upon your faces.* The second particular in this verse for laying shame and ignominy upon them.

*Doct.* 1. God makes men, ministers, and others, to be had in reproach because of their sins.

*Even the dung.* These priests had thought to have gotten love, estimation, and credit, by bearing with the corruption of the people, not reproving them for their sacrifices they brought, and their carelessness in God's service; but this God will turn to their shame.

*Doct.* 2. When men think by unlawful means to get credit, honour, and estimation among men, the Lord he will turn it to their shame and reproach. So here, and so with them who built Babel, Gen. xi. 4, but it was their confusion. To this we may apply that general, Ps. cxii. 10; hereto belong the examples of Haman, Esther vi. and vii.; and of Herod, Acts xii. 21; of Pilate, John xix. 12, 'From henceforth Pilate sought to loose him; but the Jews cried, saying, If thou deliver him, thou art not Cesar's friend: for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cesar.'

But see what Eusebius reports,* We are not to be ignorant, that the same Pilate who was interested in our Saviour's death, fell into so great calamities shortly after in the reign of Caius, that being driven by necessity, he slew himself with his own hand, and became himself the revenger of his own wickedness.

*Reason* 1. Because this will manifest his power, that he can beat them with their own weapons, overthrow them by their own inventions.

*Reason* 2. Because he is jealous of his glory, and to suffer this would obscure it. It is against the honour of a prince to let a subject grow by rebellion: it argues either injustice or impotency.

*Use* 1. This may shew the folly of those men, whether they be private men, or men in place, magistracy or ministry, who think by unlawful means to reconcile favour unto them, to get a good name, estimation, or credit. These men we may compare to him whom Jerome against Heliodorus speaks of out of the fable, that when he could do no good to be famous for, or so famous as he would, he set Diana's temple on fire; and when none accused him for the sacrilege, he went raving up and down the streets himself, crying that he kindled the fire. And being demanded by the Ephesians why he did so, he answered, Because I could not get fame by doing well, I would get it by mischief: *ut quia benè non poteram, malè omnibus innotescerem.* But it was his shame and ruin; and so may these look for, though they may prosper in it for a while; as they in building of Babel, yet shall they fall by it. And that they would stop their mouths withal, will be the means to open them the wider, specially if ever there fall a breach betwixt them, they will shew them directly, that they gained not by their courses, and the contrary to that will follow, which we read of David, 2 Sam. vi. 22.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to take heed how he seeks reputation and name by bad courses, or by any the least unfaithfulness and sin. Every man is desirous of a good name, and it is more to be desired than silver and precious things, Prov. xxii. 1. If any man would have it, let him labour for it by lawful means, and by well-doing. If he seek it by forsaking his uprightness, and sincerity of his place and profession, I may say, as 2 Kings ix. 31, 'Had Zimri peace, that slew his master?' So, had such a one credit, that left his honesty? And God shall do to him as here is threatened. A man may haply build up his house by oppression, and usury, and cruelty, but in a few successions, in a few years it comes to nothing, holds not in the third heir. A man may seek to rise like Haman, and be aloft a while, but he shall be cast down. A man may get a name a while, but it will not last long, partly because it is *vana, quia vani sunt filii hominum*, because it is not in himself, but others,* as wares put up in a broken bag, as a treasure laid up in another's mouth, not locked in a chest, nor made fast with bars, as Bernard hath it; and partly, because God will cast dung into his face. The best glory is for well-doing; that is in a man's self, not in another's power, 2 Chron. i. 12; that is laid upon a good ground, that is certain and unmoveable. It is from God, and those who have his Spirit, *vera gloria est à Spiritu veritatis.* True glory is from the Spirit of truth.

*Dung in your faces.* The Lord had honoured these priests very high, they had dishonoured him; he threatens marvellously, and the more to disgrace and dishonour them.

*Doct.* The more God hath honoured and advanced men, either in church or commonwealth, if they dishonour him, he will dishonour them, and lay the greater disgrace upon them. So with these priests, none more honoured with God than they; no greater disgrace than here is mentioned. Now this is proved in the example of Jezebel, 2 Kings ix. 37; of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 7–10; of Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 27–36; of Capernaum, Mat. xi. 22, 23; manifest in the Jews, who were the mirror, now the wonder of the world. It was once spoken of with admiration, now the byword.

*Reason* 1. Because, according to their privileges abused, so are the sins of those who have the greater or more in number. Then God giving or rewarding according to their sins and works, must needs receive more disgrace and dishonour.

*Reason* 2. Because his judgments in them will be more perspicuous, and strike a more awe and fear in others, and more shall take notice of it, because they are more in the eye, as a beacon upon a hill, as a captain or lieutenant in a band; and so the more shall glorify his justice and fear his power.

*Use* 1. If thou seest men lifted up to honour and high place, do not envy them, for if they be good, there is cause to rejoice, Prov. xx. 2; if they be wicked, and abuse their privileges and high places, there is cause to sigh, but not to envy, Prov. xxix. 2, because they are not far from a disgrace, a public one, a great one, answerable to their honour. The clouds that obscure the sun are lifted up, but poured down again. Who would envy men upon an high pinnacle, ready to be cast down? who a man walking upon the ice, where it is ten to one every hour his feet will slide, or it break, and he be utterly cast down to the bottom of a pit, specially if some secret fire be kindled on it, or the beams of the sun shine hotly upon it?

*Use* 2. To teach those whom God hath advanced and honoured more than others with any privilege of knowledge, wisdom, authority, or credit, not to think that those privileges were given them that they might

* Neque illud à nobis ignorari debet, eum ipsum Pilatum, qui Servatoris neci interfuit, in tantas calamitates incurrisse, ut necessitate adductus, sibi propria manu mortem consciscerit, suorumque scelerum ipse vindex extiterit.—*Eus. Hist.* lib. ii. cap. 7.

* Merces congregatas in saccum pertusum, ad thesaurum in alieno ore constitutum, quæ arca non clauditur, nec seras habet.—*Bern. de adventu domini*, serm. 4.

be the Nimrods of the earth, and fight against God, and his cause, and his church, and dishonour him, and think to carry it away without dishonour from him; nay, they shall be more dishonoured and more vile than any others. For the greater grace sinners have received, if they sin, their punishment shall be so much larger (Chrysost.).* Mighty sinners shall be mightily tormented (Jerome ad Heliod.). † It were good all that are above others would write it in their houses, and every place where they come, and keep it in their hearts. And such as are above others in their places in the church, would remember that, Mat. v. 13, 'Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.'

*And you shall be like unto it.* Or, it shall carry you away; meaning that he would add confusion and destruction unto their shame.

*Doct.* Shame and disgrace brought upon ministers, magistrates, or any other by their just desert and default, by their careless carriage and dissolute life, is but a forerunner of confusion and destruction, which usually followeth, unless it be prevented by repentance. So is it here: Mat. v. 13, 1 Sam. ii. 30–32, with chap. iv., 1 Sam. xv. 30, Jer. xxiv. 9, 10.

*Reason* 1. Because this argueth a great height of wickedness, and that men are settled much in it, when shame shall not shake them from it, and rouse them up. For whereas to a man of any honesty, or that hath any spark of goodness, his name is of more account than his goods; and that touched, more affects him than the other taken away. Now touched in this and not affected, argues his desperateness and dishonesty.

*Reason* 2. Because when God hath smitten men in things that are so near unto them, and ought to be so dear, and they return not, it is just with him to proceed unto their persons and themselves.

*Use* 1. To teach us, when we see men in contempt, ministers, magistrates, and others, to judge of it as a forerunner of some fearful confusion and destruction. If they be unjustly, without their default, then is it of a general judgment upon the church and land, it being also a judgment itself; if justly, for their dissolute and corrupt lives, then is it a forerunner of a judgment to them of their confusion and destruction. As it was in the time of popery, when the clergy was come to the height of wealth, yet they were in the wane and ebb of worship and respect; nay, in shame and reproach, because, as in the morning, the nearer it is to the rising of the sun, the more light is in the air, and the more are deformities and things out of order espied; so as the gospel drew nearer, they that were like Baal's priests, for deceiving the people, in contempt, with not affecting them to make them return from their idols to the living God; therefore shame and confusion came upon them, as we have seen. So of others, if they be in contempt, &c.; and as of them, so of magistrates, and other particular men. For as a sickness, caused by man's misdieting of himself, or otherwise by his default, and not speedily cured, is a forerunner and procurer of a greater disease, so is it in this case.

*Use* 2. To teach every one that is in any reproach or contempt, whatsoever he is, to think of it as the harbinger of confusion and destruction, if he be not affected with it to repentance. Therefore should he labour to lay it to his heart, and be humbled for it, and reformed by it; he should be occasioned by it to search his ways and his conversation. If it befall him for righteousness' sake, he hath wherein to rejoice; if for his infirmities, and unjustly from those who reproach him, yet he should see whether it is not justly from God or no, for that may be justly from him, which is unjustly from them. But if, indeed, justly, for his dissolute and loose life, then is not to be expected anything but the confusion and destruction of his person, unless that make him to humble and reform himself: for when hard and bitter words prevail not, then masters go to beating and punishing with blows. So doth God.

Ver. 4. *And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant which I made with Levi might stand, saith the Lord of hosts.*

*And ye shall know.* The prophet proceedeth to the causes of this condemnation. These are three: the first is, because they had neglected their care of God's worship, not of any ignorance, but against their knowledge; for they knew that the duty belonged to them, and the commandment was to them. For thus it is to be read, 'For you know.'

*Doct.* 1. Their sin is the greater, and deserveth the more punishment, who have the knowledge what they ought to do, and yet follow their corrupt affections, than theirs which know not.

Now the knowledge here spoken of is of two things: of their duty, and what they ought to do; and of their dignity, and what God had bestowed upon them. And both makes their sin the greater, because they are gone against their own knowledge and God's kindness. That though God had bestowed great blessings upon them they had forgot it, though they knew it, and were unthankful unto him.

*Doct.* 2. Unthankfulness is a sin, when men do not answer God's love as he hath had care and dealt liberally with them; *vide* chap. i. ver, 2.

*I send this commandment unto you, that my covenant might stand.* They must perform that is their parts, or else he would perform no covenant with them.

*Doct.* 3. God will not, neither is bound to perform covenant with man, to give him anything he hath promised, whether spiritual or temporal, of this life or

* Quantò major gratia, tanto amplior peccantibus pœna.—*Chrysost.*

† Potentes potenter tormenta patientur.—*Hieron ad Heliod.*

that is to come, unless he perform his covenant and conditions. The covenant of God is either general or special. The general, either legal or evangelical; all which requires the conditions to be performed on man's part, if he would have God perform, or else, &c.; Lev. xviii. 5, Gal. iii 11, Mark xvi. 16, 1 Sam. ii. 30, 2 Chron. xv. 2.

*Reason* 1. Because their not performing frees him from his promise, and binds him not to perform it, to give such good things to such unworthy fedifragies, covenant breakers; not to give, as it were, the children's bread to dogs.

*Reason* 2. When they perform, he will, because he is most faithful that hath promised, and can neither lie nor deceive, he being true, and truth itself.

*Obj.* 'For what though some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, and every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, and overcome when thou art judged,' Rom. iii. 3, 4. Then will he perform when man doth not.

*Ans.* That will not follow from this, which is manifest thus: The apostle asketh the question, Whereas many of the Jews were unfaithful, and covenant-breakers, whether their infidelity should abrogate and make void the covenant of God, that he should shew no fruit of it among them, and, as man, should break his promise, and perform to none that which was promised to all. He answereth, that cannot be; but howsoever the greater part of them had broken covenant, with whom he might justly break, and would, yet his covenant should have his full force and efficacy; though not in all, yet in the nation, because there was ever some good men among that people, who believed the promises, and lived uncorruptly and holily; therefore in them, and to them, should that be performed which was promised; shewing that the wickedness of a multitude shall not make the promise of God void, and of none effect; but he will perform them to the believers, and they who perform conditions, though they be but a very few. And so the place makes for the point, not against it.

*Obj.* Many enjoy God's blessings, and never perform the condition, but live wickedly and profanely.

*Ans.* They enjoy not the blessing of eternity, neither ever shall; and as for temporal things, they may enjoy them, but not any blessing by them. It were better for them to be without them; for they increase their sin, and are but fed and sustained by them for the slaughter, as the damned are, by God's power, to endure his wrath and punishment.

*Use* 1. If in our observation we find that many promises God hath made are not performed to ourselves or others, as there are many other things which may be answered for clearing and acquitting the truth and fidelity of God in this kind, especially in temporal things, he gives spiritual, an ounce of which is better than many a pound of the other. And if he breaks not that promiseth silver, and gives the greater sum in gold, so not God. If he promise deliverance, and gives patience under the cross, which is better for the sufferer, he still performs, because such things had those exceptions. And so in many other things, but this especially; when the good things promised are not performed, the cause is in ourselves and other men why they are not performed, and not in God, because we perform not conditions. And this being, makes us, not him, covenant-breakers, who have made ourselves uncapable and unworthy of his blessings, and so have freed him from his promise, by our breaking with him. Now he that is freed cannot break covenant, though he do not the thing before covenanted.

*Use* 2. To let us see the folly of those men who think to have God's promises performed unto them, and him to keep covenant with them; and in many things make no doubt but he hath done, and in future times assure themselves he will, when they neither have done, nor yet endeavour to keep any covenant with him. If the former be true, do they not deceive themselves? And are they not, though how wise soever in other things, yet in this stark fools? For if he be a fool that, because he hath the word, or the bond of a good man, one able, and that never broke, for the payment of a thousand pounds at such a time, and such a place, but upon condition he perform such a service, or effect such a work, to lay his whole state and his whole condition upon that, that it will be performed in the same time and place, and yet he never go about to perform the conditions at all, or as it should be performed, were he not a fool? Sure in all your judgments he were very unwise. And yet, alas! how many fools and unwise men have we who deal thus, lay all upon God's fidelity, and perform nothing themselves at all. As if God must needs perform, because he had promised, and could not be faithful unless he did perform, when they keep no condition. Many a man, deluded by Satan and his own secure heart, persuades himself God hath been merciful unto him, and forgiven him his sins, though he never came truly to see sin, nor to sorrow for sin, nor forsake and reform his corruptions, wherein true repentance consisteth, and which is the condition on man's part, i ever he would have God take away his sin, and put them out of his remembrance. Many one thinks God had performed his covenant of temporal things, because he is in the midst of abundance, and hath his barns full, and his bags full, and everywhere finds he increaseth, though he never made any conscience of his ways, and the works of God, but at best lived but civilly, and kept his credit with men, and sees not that he is deceived, and sees that these are but things that are common things, wherewith he is but fatted for the shambles, and such as are reserved for his evil. And for time to come, many doubt not but they shall obtain great things in this life, and that God will give

them honour, and favour, and riches, and abundance, though they never keep condition with him. Fools and blind, who know they cannot live except they eat, not reap except they sow, not recover health except they use physic and the means appointed, and yet think, without performing the grand means and condition with God, they shall have what he hath promised! And so haply they may; but as Israel had a king in God's wrath, and quails in his displeasure, and as the physician gives his patient liberty to eat what he list when he is out of all hope, and despairs of ever recovering him, many a man persuades himself that God will save him, though he never was able to perform the condition of the law, neither ever endeavoured to perform the condition of the gospel. Truly this is not to believe, but deceive himself with an opinion of faith, he neither having the knowledge of the promises, the ground of it, nor works the answerable fruits of it, and so hath but a vain, foolish, and dead faith. But he shall know his folly, when God shall manifest unto him that he is not bound to perform promise, because he never kept condition.

*Use* 3. To teach every man that hath any desire that God should perform covenant with him, to endeavour to perform conditions with God.* He must first seek to know what they are God requires of him, and then do them; for without that he cannot do. And his searching for knowledge must not only be for the general, but for the particulars of his place, what command is sent to him, and then faithfully do it, that God's covenant may stand. We must repent, believe and obey the gospel and commandments of God; for it is godliness that hath the promises, and shall have the performance. Let such a one remember 1 Tim. iv. 8, and Prov. xxi. 21. Yea, he may assure himself that if he apply himself to that which God requireth of him, and he hath covenanted for, he shall be sure to find him that hath been a willing promiser, a most faithful performer; for *parum erat promissio, etiam scripto se teneri voluit*, Aug. in Ps. cxix. And so no good thing that he hath promised shall fail, but shall all be made good, Joshua xxii. 15.

*My covenant with Levi.* Here is the honour and dignity he had bestowed upon them, having made a special agreement and covenant with them.

*Doct.* The Lord hath specially honoured his messengers and servants, the priests in the Old, and the ministers in the New Testament; for he hath not only made the general covenant with them, 'I will be their God, they my people,' but hath made a particular and special agreement and covenant with them. So here, and Num. viii. 13, 14, 'Thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them as a shake offering to the Lord. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine:' 1 Sam. ii. 28, 'And I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, and to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before me; and I gave unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel:' John xv. 15, 2 Cor. iii. 6.

*Reason* 1. Because they are of his privy council, and know his secret: Amos iii. 7, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets.' Privy councillors are specially honoured, and have a particular covenant made with them.

*Reason* 2. Because they are his messengers, his ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20, they are specially honoured, and new sworn, a new covenant.

*Use* 1. No reason why the great and rich men of the world should contemn the ministry for their children as too base a thing, and not fit for their sons, whenas God hath thus honoured it, and taken them so near unto himself. In respect of which, Amos, who was believed to be the brother of Azariah, the king of Judah, thought it no base thing his son should be a prophet, neither Christ himself to be a preacher.

*Use* 2. This may be a caveat for men to take heed how they abuse or injure the ministers, who are so near unto him, and whom he hath thus honoured; certainly they ought to honour him, though it go against the hair and stomach with them, as with Haman, because he would have them honoured; but if not, but they abuse and disgrace them, and use them as the Ammonites did David's servants; let them take heed they stink not in his nostrils; for if princes be tender hearted and stone* affected, with the injuries of their common subjects, and will revenge them, what will they do for their counsellors, their ambassadors? And yet mean men will now abuse them in words, and contemn as far as they can for the law of man, if they sing not *placentia*, if they teach cross to their humours; but their portion is with the Lord, and so is theirs who so abuse them. And one day they shall both know whether is better to reprove and lift up his voice and spare not, or to spare and reform nothing.

*Use* 3. It may comfort the minister against contempt when he is faithful, yet to be still so, and bold, remembering his honour God hath given him, which is better than all the honour man can afford. And though men may think their faithfulness may hinder them from honour, as Balak said to Balaam, Num. xxiv. 11, 'Therefore, now flee unto thy place; I thought surely to promote thee to honour, but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour;' yet it is not so, for that is the true honour which God gives, and will give, and no man can take; and they ought, as it is, 2 Cor. iii. 12, 'seeing they have such hope, to use boldness of speech.'

*Use* 4. This may teach what manner of men ministers ought to be, how sanctified, of what purity and

* Cum dominus promittit, ne dubites; sed illa fac, per quæ tales attrahere poteris promissiones.—*Chrys. hom.* 25 *ad popul. Anti.*

* Qu. 'sore.'—ED.

integrity, seeing God hath taken them to be so near unto himself; therefore ought they to be careful that offer them to God, and they that receive them when they offer; and when they receive, not for favour, or money, or kindred, or any such thing. A man will be marvellous careful whom he commendeth, but for a common servant, to a mean man his friend; more to a prince, most to be so nigh to him. If the steward of a house be permitted and trusted to admit such as are fit, how careful will he be! If the president of a prince's council to take in such as are able men, how vigilant and inquisitive will he be, that they be such as be competent for the place! So should it be in this; the like care should be had, and woe unto him that hath not. And men that are in the place ought to look marvellous carefully to their conversation, and to keep themselves holy. It was taught, Lev. xxii. 2, 10, how unblemished the priest should be; for if the whole people must be holy, more they. And if they must be careful of their offering and sacrifices, more of themselves. And if they be not, then ought authority, like Ashpenaz, Dan. i. 3–5, to choose out the most unblemished, and look to them, and suffer not them to be good fellows, gamesters, and such like.

*Covenant with Levi.* They took not this calling to themselves, but were chosen to it of God, and he made the agreement and covenant with them.

*Doct.* None may take this calling upon them, to be God's ministers, God's messengers, and to meddle in these spiritual things, which are proper to the ministers, but he that is called of God, and with whom God hath made this covenant. The affirmative infers the negative. Hereto belongs that Num. i. 51, and xvi. 10, and iv. 15, 20; Ezra ii. 62, 63; Heb. v. 4. This made the apostles ever avouch their calling, Gal. i. 1, James i., 1 Peter i. 1. Hereto is that Rom. x. 15. There are three kinds of callings, when men are called by men, and not by God: as first, all teachers; secondly, of God by ministry of the word, all ordinary ministry; thirdly, by Christ immediately, as apostles, Gal. i. 1. The first to be abhorred, the third to be admired, the second to be expected of all in an ordinary planted church, Rom. x. 15. The calling is double, or hath two parts: the first, inward ability for gifts, and aptness for mind, willingness, and ability; the second is outward, the calling by man, and the church. Hereto belongs the descriptions of a bishop and ministers, set out by St Paul, 1 Tim. iii. 2; whereto else may it tend? If every one may intrude himself into the church and the calling, without the call of it; and that 1 Tim. v. 22.

*Reason* 1. Because it is a sin unto them who shall, and a curse belongs to them for meddling with things that are holy, when they are not separated and appointed for them. They are thereby liable to God's judgments, as was Uzzah, 1 Chron. xiii. 10, and Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 18, 19.

*Reason* 2. Because else the church should be too much burdened; for whenas, 1 Tim. v. 17, 'the elders that rule well are worthy of double honour,' therefore many, for ambition and ease, would challenge the ministry, and take it upon them for the honour's sake.

*Reason* 3. Because, 1 Cor. xiv. 40, 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' Therefore must there be a calling and choosing of them by the church; for the other is to make all confusion and disorder.

*Use* 1. This serves to confute all Anabaptistical dreams, who contemn all ordinary callings, vocations; and think that every man may at his pleasure, and when he list, take this calling, and those ecclesiastical functions upon them. For if this be sound and true, that must needs be false and corrupt, that any should take any part of this calling without warrant from God, and besides the order that God hath appointed. Yet I deny not but there is a difference where a church is not yet planted, where every one that knows Christ may preach him, and labour to gain others that are ignorant of Christian religion, and are not to look for an ordinary ordination. For then is he chosen by the silent suffrages and voices of those who hear, and that is his calling; yet is he not to refuse the ordinary calling, if after it be to be had. But when a church is already planted and established, because all things must be done in order, then is required an apparent ordination by voices or imposition of hands, that trouble and confusion might be avoided. Neither do I deny, but sometime there is an extraordinary function, as were the prophets, not of the Levitical stock, not ordained of the priests, which God stirred up, when ordinary ministers could not reform the corruptions of the time; but what he did extraordinarily, is to be admired rather than imitated. For we must follow the prescript rule that is given us, which is, that every man have his ordinary calling, which is from God, by men.

*Obj.* 'Now, brethren, I beseech you, know ye the house of Stephanus, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have given themselves to minister unto the saints,' 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

*Ans.* The meaning is not, that they called themselves, but that they set themselves apart to the ministry of the saints, in the purpose and resolution of their own hearts, and not contemning or neglecting the calling of God by the church.

*Use* 2. To let private men and women see their danger in meddling with those things which are proper to the minister, when they have not a calling to it. If Uzzah, if Uzziah were smitten, how shall they escape? Whether they can pretend the authority of the church, as in the Romish Church they can, for women to baptize, yet shall they not escape for excuse of necessity; it will not serve, because that is not from God, but it is from man's folly or ignorance. If it be objected, that it is not then a sacrament which is given by them, when they have no authority to deliver a

sacrament; I answer, Yes, for the seal is the prince's, though some other than the lord-keeper set it to by some indirect dealing. And though such a minister sin in dealing with the word and sacraments, yet are they such to the hearer and receiver. Again, that which St Augustine* hath in his second book against Petilian; they are true sacraments though they are not true ministers, because what they give is not their own, but God's.

*Use* 3. To teach every man to be sure that he hath a calling of God to the ministry before he take it upon him, that he may be able to say, as Jer. vii. 15, 'I have not thrust in myself for a pastor after thee, neither have I desired the day of misery; thou knowest that which came out of my lips was right before thee.' His calling is his inward gifts and conscience, ability and care to use them; and the outward calling of the church, 1 Tim. iii. 10. For without this may he not do it, though he be never so excellent, as it is dangerous for him to meddle with this without the other. And if his gifts be inferior to many, or as it may be but in his own sense, yet if it be the judgment of others, he may not by modesty or shamefacedness refuse, though at first he may profess what he thinketh of himself; yet if they will not change, then must he yield and submit himself.

Ver. 5. *My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave him fear, and he feared me, and was afraid before my name.*

*My covenant was with him of life and peace.* The dignity bestowed upon these priests, consisting in the special covenant, is here amplified by the parts of the covenant. First, on God's part, which is double, a gracious promise of life and peace, and a faithful performance.

*My covenant was with him of life and peace.* That is, I covenanted with him, and took him into favour, and made a league and agreement with him; and by my covenant I bound myself to give him first life, that is, length of days here on earth. St Jerome's opinion of the life of grace here, and of glory hereafter, is not greatly probable, hardly any instance of the like interpretation, and that peace following after, not so to be understood of spiritual peace, but of an outward prosperity in this life; and so they who incline to Jerome in the former understand it. And it must needs be, according to that which is, Num. xxv. 12, 13, 'Wherefore say to him, Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of the priest's office for ever; because he was zealous for his God, and hath made an atonement for the children of Israel.' For the covenant of peace is expounded by the perpetual priesthood. And in other places the branches of this covenant are set down in the abundance of outward things, by the offering and other means, both to the priests, Num. xviii. 8–20, 26, 30, and for the Levites, Num. xviii. 21, 24, 31.

*And I gave them him.* God's performance. As I promised him these things, so I did very certainly and assuredly perform to Aaron, and Phinehas, and others, who did perform conditions and covenant with me, and will do to as many as shall so deal also with me.

*For my fear.* Now he comes to the second, containing the conditions performed by Levi, and these are the fear of God, and humility. Some read it, 'I gave him my fear;' which is true, and agrees well with the doctrine of faith, for the fear of God is the gift of God, Jer. xxxii. 40. But the words are otherwise, 'I gave him these for the fear wherewith he feared me.' Because he believed my word, and honoured me in his place, and looked to my worship in himself and others, I honoured him, and gave him these things.

*And was afraid before my name.* Junius readeth it, 'He was destroyed for my name,' *i. e.* for not honouring my name, Num. xx. 12, 24, 28. But the whole speech here is against it; for he intending to set forth the care which Aaron and his sons had of the worship of God, and to commend him rather than tax his infirmities. It is rather, 'he was humbled before me,' he walked humbly and lowly, and did all in humility, not lifting up himself either for his high calling or for his faithful service, the parts of the covenant which is the priest's dignity. And first on God's part, and first his promise.

*Doct.* Long life and the length of days is the blessing and gift of God, that which he promiseth and performeth to all those who fear him and walk in his ways. Prov. x. 27, 'The fear of the Lord increaseth the days; but the years of the wicked shall be diminished;' and xvi. 31; Exod. xx. 12; Deut. xxv. 45; 1 Kings iii. 14, 'And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep mine ordinances and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, I will prolong thy days.' Ps. xci. 16.

*Reason* 1. Because God will be glorified by his in this life, as the psalmist, 'I will not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.' Now the longer they live the more they may glorify God; then it is a blessing.

*Reason* 2. Because it is a blessing to help many, and to draw many unto God in this life; but that is done by living long, seeing it is so long before a man comes to be able to do either, many of his years and days spent before he be fit for it.

*Obj.* But many of the children of God die untimely, and live not long; how then is this true?

*Ans.* This is not simply a blessing, as if he were happy that lives long, but as a symbol or sign of God's good favour and love. If, then, he shews his love to some rather by taking them out of this life, than by prolonging their days, he doth the rather perform his

* Vera sacramenta licet non veri ministri; quia dant non sua, sed Dei.—*Aug.* lib. ii., *cont. Petil.*

promise than break it. A man promiseth ten acres of ground in one field, and gives him an hundred in another, he hath not broken his promise. So if God have promised long life, that is, an hundred years here, and after not give it him, but gives him eternity in the heavens, he hath not broken his promise; for it being not promised as a blessing and happy thing in itself, but as a sign of his good will, which is greater sometimes to be taken out of this life; as Jeroboam's good son was, that he might not be infected with the sins of his father's house, and not afflicted with the sight of those horrible judgments that were to fall upon that graceless family; which was no ill bargain, to be taken from earth to heaven, from the conflict to the triumph, from the battle to the victory, from men to God, and to the company of his angels and saints.

*Use* 1. This is to admonish old men to be thankful unto God for his mercy in preserving them so long, and lengthening their days, specially if they have been found in the way of righteousness, Prov. xvi. 31. If they have feared God and walked uprightly and humbly before him, it hath been his blessing upon them and mercy to them; otherwise it hath been but a curse unto them, for they have but lived to heap up wrath against the day of wrath, and to make up a greater measure of their sins, that God may make a greater measure of vengeance. So that it had been better for them never to have been born, or else to have died so soon as they were born; for the longer they live the more sins they commit, and the greater shall be their torments. But greater shall be his glory that is found in the way of righteousness and in well-doing, because he hath more glorified God. And he ought still to use this as a blessing of God, that he may glorify him more, and fit himself more for him and for his service, imagining that as old age is a blessing, so is it a bond that he should perform; as Ps. lxxi. 17, 18, 'O God, thou hast taught me from my youth even until now; therefore will I tell of thy wondrous works; yea, even unto mine old age and grey head. O God, forsake me not until I have declared thine arm unto this generation, and thy power to all them that shall come.' And if he have borne it in his youth, it will be less burdensome in his old age, for to others it is heavy.

*Use* 2. Then is it lawful for a man to pray for long life, that he may live to glorify God here. So did David, Ps. cii. 27; so Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 3. True it is that a Christian man should be equally prepared to life or death; for in things wherein a man cannot certainly know which will make more for the glory of God and their own good and salvation, the will of man should be equally prepared for both, lest it should resist God; so in this. And because he should less torment and vex himself with the desire of life or fear of death, yet is it not unlawful for him to pray for life for the grounds before, so he pray for it as for other things, conditionally. Truth is that of Solomon, Eccles. vii. 1, 'The day of death is better than the day of one's birth,' because of miseries and fearful times, when it is like, as Augustine, to be *diù vivere, diù torqueri*, to live long, to be vexed long; or as Cyprian,* Death is not only not unprofitable to believers, but profitable; because it sets a man out of danger of sinning, and puts him in a security of not sinning. Yet proves it not that it is the more to be desired, Whenas a man may shew his patience and spiritual fortitude in his own miseries, and the more he suffers and conquers the more he shall be glorified. And in other men's miseries he may shew piety, comfort, and good-will towards other, and mercy to them in their miseries, and find himself the more mercy. And his sins he may break off, not by ending his life, but by amending of it, and by true repentance. And so his age may be a crown of righteousness. He is a wise physician that knows how to temper his medicine that it will confirm health; and he is a wise man who learns so to live that a good death may follow after.

*Doct.* Peace, plenty, prosperity, a prosperous estate, and plenty of outward things, a liberal portion, God hath promised, and will perform to those who fear him, and will walk in his ways: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, which hath the promise of the life present, and of that that is to come.' Deut. xxviii. 1, Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

*Reason* 1. Because they may by them be better able both to glorify God and benefit men, being helps of their weakness and strength to their infirmities.

*Reason* 2. Because he might encourage them against all the discouragements they shall find in professing his fear, and by these balance them, that they be not driven back from him by the tempests Satan will stir up against them.

*Use* 1. They who have the true fear of God may best be and live without carping care for the things of this life, they may best take the apostle's exhortation, Let their conversation be without covetousness, Heb. xiii. 5, for they have his promise and covenant to be provided for of a liberal and rich portion. He that hath covenanted with a rich, wealthy man, and one of great power, with the prince of a country, that he shall be in safety and abundance under him for such and such service, hath taken all care he will for it, only his care is to use it well; so it should be with these. And far better may it be, seeing his power and riches exceedeth all; he hath promised, and will perform; and 'though the lions lack, and suffer hunger, yet shall they lack nothing at all who fear the Lord.' But many wicked men, void of God's fear, have more abundance than most of those who fear him. Be it so, yet is not this crossed; for as the life of man consists not in abundance, so not their prosperity when they have competency. And a little that is sufficient

* Non solum fidelibus inutilis non est mors, verum etiam utilis reperitur; quoniam peccandi periculis hominem substrahit, et in non peccandi securitatem constituit.

which the righteous hath, where there is contentment with it, is better than great riches of the ungodly. And if such have not so great abundance, and seem some time to be scanted, it is either because they have some secret sin known to God, which shuts up his hand towards them, or because they seek them indirectly, which God makes frustrate, or he sees how their hearts would be upon them, and stolen away from him; and that riches would devour, or for a time obscure their religion, knowing their hearts better than themselves, or as Chrysostom (*Hom.* 16 *ad popul. Antioch*), he first makes men fit to use and dispose the riches he means to give them, and after gives them riches; which unless he had done, the bestowing of riches had not been a gift, but a punishment and revenge.* This public and general charter of God hath these exceptions.

*Use* 2. To teach every man what is the nighest and readiest way, what is the king's highway to prosperity and plenty, to riches and wealth; the fear of God, and the walking in his ways. Many men who hasten to riches, and have set down with themselves, and resolved to be rich, take many ways to it by false weights and measures, by cozening or deceit, by flattery or other wicked courses. Haply a man may come to riches or abundance sooner than another that keeps the king's highway, as he that hath found a by and casting way may come to his journey's end speedier than he that keeps the ordinary way; but they shall not prosper with him: Prov. xx. 21, 'An heritage is hastily gotten at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed.' But poverty shall come upon him. Prov. xxviii. 22, 'A man with a wicked eye hasteth to riches, and knoweth not that poverty shall come upon him.' And he shall be guilty of much sin, and bring much sorrow upon himself, Prov. xxii. 20, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. But they who take the right way shall be sure of them, and not find sorrows with them. For so God's blessing makes rich, for they shall have them by virtue of his covenant, and as testimonies of his love, which is far better than far greater riches, if it be but a pittance.

*And I gave them him.* That he had promised, that he performed.

*Doct.* God in his will and decrees, covenants and promises, is most certain and sure. So much is here, and James i. 17.

*Use.* To comfort those who live in trouble and affliction in this life; the Lord will make good all his promises to them in due time. Upon this should they stay themselves as the anchor hold, fast against all temptations; herewith should they comfort themselves, as Ps. cxix. 49, 50, 'Remember the promise made to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust. It is my comfort in my trouble; for thy promise hath quickened me.' As Abraham said, Gen. xxii. 8, 'God will provide;' it may be in this life, but if the leaves fall, the roots are sure to stand; though earthly things are not always performed, because they are not absolutely promised, yet heavenly and eternal shall.

*My fear;* or, *for the fear wherewith he feared me.* The conditions on the priest's part are fear and humility.

*Doct.* Though men be bound to do and suffer whatsoever God shall lay upon them, and when they have done all, both are, and must confess they are, unprofitable servants, Luke xvii. 10; yet the Lord in his great mercy and goodness propoundeth, promiseth, and performeth a reward unto them here, and Gen. xxii. 16, 17, Mat. vi. 4, 6, 18, Mat. x. 42, Mark x. 29, 30, Heb. vi. 10.

*Reason* 1. Because of the imperfection and corruption of men, therefore hath he propounded them.

*Reason* 2. Because he is faithful; and having promised, must and will perform.

*Use.* This is to encourage and hearten us to obey in all things with cheerfulness, and to bear all things with patience, by the hope and expectation of these things; Heb. x. 32–38 and xi. 24–26, Mat. v. 11, 12, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Indeed, the most ingenuous, filial, and acceptable service, is to obey for the love of God, and that simply without respect of reward; but because of our infirmity that cannot, and God's mercy who hath so provided for our weakness. For as St Chrysostom speaks,* We ought in grievous and irksome things, to consider not the labours but the rewards; as merchants mind the gain, not the dangers of the sea. So must we look at heaven and the presence of God.

*For the fear.* These blessings of life and peace are promised for God's fear, and this is the condition he required of them for them.

*Doct.* He that would have the blessings of God performed to him which he hath promised, must have this condition of his fear, and must fear him; for that he commends here in Levi, he commends to posterity, and commands the performance for the obtaining of the other: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh that there were such an heart in them, to fear me, and to keep all my commandments alway, that it might go well with them, and with their children for ever. Ps. cxv. 11, 13, Prov. xiv. 26, 27, Luke i. 50. This fear of God is a continual reverent awe of him, rising partly on consideration of his power, and partly of his mercy. First, it is a reverent awe: 'Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice in trembling.' Secondly, continued not only for a brunt or in some judgment, as those in Jonah i. 16; but Prov. xxviii. 14, 'Blessed is the man that feareth alway, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into evil.' Thirdly, the grounds: (1.) God's power; though there be no expectation of evil, as we reverence a man

* Nisi hoc fecisset, divitiarum erogatio non donum, sed ultio fuisset et pœna.

* Oportet in rebus gravibus et molestis, non labores sed præmia considerare; ut mercatores non maris pericula, sed lucrum spectant: ita et nos cœlum et Dei præsentiam.—*Chrysost. in Joh. Hom.* vii.

of authority, though he bear no evil will unto us, but good, even for his authority's sake, 1 Kings xix. 13, Heb. xii. 21. (2.) His mercy; because he hath shewed them mercy and goodness both in soul and body, Ps. cxxx. 4, Hosea iii. 5, Job. i. 9.

*Reason* 1. Because only they must have them to whom they belong; now as Christ of one, health: Mat. xv. 26, 'And he answered, and said, It is not good to take the children's bread, and to cast it to whelps.' So of all, they are children's bread, only their portion, which are God's; now they are only his which fear him, Mal. i. 6. Honour is filial fear.

*Reason* 2. Because in covenants, no man may expect another's promise, but he that performs that he undertook; so in this. And though the mercy of God be great, it is to be expected and found, not when men perform no conditions, but in passing by their infirmities when they perform them.

*Use* 1. It is matter of comfort to as many as live in the fear and continual awe of God; to them belong the promises, and they shall have the performance of them; for they performing their condition, he cannot nor will not but perform his. They may haply be in reproach and scorn, in the time and age they live in, for the fear of God which they profess, the righteous being an abomination to the wicked, and restraining themselves from evil, be made a prey to the wicked, Isa. lix. 15. Yet against these must this comfort them, thinking that these things are but as sour sauce to make sweet and delicious meat more toothsome and more wholesome; neither must it trouble them to see others in abundance greater than they, and haply when they are such as perform no condition with God at all, but are atheists and profane blasphemers, and wicked miscreants, and such like; for this should rather comfort them, If he do so in his general providence to those who have no promise, what will he do to those who have the promise? And if he feed the swine, will he starve the children? If the dogs be full and corn fed, will he destitute the children when the bread is theirs? He will not, sure. It may be they shall not have things superfluous to abuse unto wantonness, and so to grow worse; but they shall have that which is necessary and fitting for them: and that little is better than the others' much.

*Use* 2. To stir up every man that hath not this fear, to labour and use all means to come by it. It is the condition that makes him capable of the blessings of God, and the lawful heir of them. He that knew a means to make himself capable of some rich man's goods, and to be his heir or executor after his death, would desire it, seek for it, and strive to attain it by all means. Admit it were the reverencing, and honouring, and pleasing of him in all things, would he not be double diligent about it? So in this; every man should pray earnestly for it, and long after it, Neh. i. 11, Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

But because many take the comfort to them who have no part in it, and persuade themselves they have this fear when they have no portion of it, we may not unprofitably call to mind the five effects, as five notes to know this childlike fear by; handled chap. i. 6.

*He was humbled before me.* The second thing God commendeth in these, as the thing he delights in and approved, and as the condition on their parts for which he gave them his blessings, is humility.

*Doct.* He that is humble and lowly in mind shall receive the blessings of God; to him hath God promised them and will perform them: James iv. 6. 'But the Scripture offereth more grace, and therefore saith, God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.' Ps. cxxxviii. 6, Prov. iii. 34, and xxix. 23.

Ver. 6. *The law of truth was in his mouth, and there was no iniquity found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.*

*The law of truth was in his mouth.* Here begins the second reason given of the Lord why he would bring these judgments upon these priests, namely, their dissimilitude with the former and first priests, with whom he made the covenant, and to whom he did perform it, Aaron, Eleazar, Phinehas. And in this the order observed is, he setteth down in the first part of the comparison their good and worthy parts which were the predecessors, ver. 6, and the reason of it, ver. 7. There are four worthy parts reckoned of theirs; and these were not of private and particular parts, as they were private men, but they were such parts as were in them as public persons. As if it had reference with the former, he said he did not only carry himself and approve himself a good and godly man, but he shewed himself a wise and complete doctor, both in teaching the law and truth of God, and giving most wise, grave, and wholesome counsel.

*The law of truth was in his mouth.* The first part of the predecessors, which was commendable in them. He was ever most studious of the law of God, and most skilful in it, and taught it most sincerely to his people, ever teaching most sound doctrine to them, that they might observe my precepts.

*And there was no iniquity found in his lips.* The second thing commendable. He never propounded or taught any error; he never deceived any of my people, to draw them from my true worship, but taught ever that which was wholesome and good. Iniquity is commonly taken for the perversion and depravation of the known right, and is opposite to equity and truth.

*He walked with me in peace and equity.* The third thing commendable. The sum of it is, he lived and performed the duty of his place without all negligence and unfaithfulness, approving himself to God and men. He walked with me, *i. e.* he was most careful to please me, and to approve himself unto me, to worship me as I required, and followed not the wickedness of the age, nor was corrupted with the depravations of the

time, whereby men were depraved in my service and fear, as Gen. v. 22.

*In peace.* That is, peaceably, not provoking me to anger, but cleaving fast unto me and obeying my will, so that I had no cause of expostulating or quarrelling with him. Cyril saith, To have peace with God is nothing else but to desire to know and do that which God requires, and to offend him in nothing.

*And did turn many from iniquity.* The fourth thing commendable in them was, that by their exact walking and faithful teaching, they helped to turn others from their sinful ways. Out of the coherence, that from their personal and inherent virtues he proceeds to the virtues of their place and their public actions and carriages, we may note:

*Doct.* It is not enough for a man to be honest and good in himself, in his own person; but if he have any place, either more or less public, he must be good and faithful in that, if he would be approved of God; as if he be a magistrate, or minister, or officer, or master of a family. As this is manifest in the coherence, so by that Gen. xviii. 17–19, and Exod. xviii. 19–21. Hence is both the commendations and blemish of old Eli; he was a good priest, a good magistrate, but a bad father: in the more public, good; in the less, defective, 1 Sam. i. 2. Hence we read in Scripture the commendations of good governors and kings, both for their private parts and their public virtues; in themselves fearing God, and in public discharging their duties sufficiently and faithfully. And in the New Testament we find not only private and personal duties prescribed to masters, fathers, husbands, to ministers, and magistrates, but specially public, Eph. v. and vi., Col. iii. and iv., 1 Tim. iii. 2, &c., Tit. i. 6. Hence the commendation of the angel of the church of Ephesus, though he was defective in personal, Rev. ii. 2, and the reproof of the angel of Pergamos, vers. 14, 15.

*Reason* 1. Because he more glorifies God; for, though his good works, as a private man, do glorify God, yet nothing so much as his faithfulness in his place public, which makes that God is glorified much more, and of more. An annual magistrate may procure the glory of God more in that year than in all his life, not only because *regis ad exemplum*, &c., but because they may command and compel more.

*Reason* 2. Because this will blemish the other their private parts, and bring God's judgments upon them, at least temporal, as in Eli and the angel of Pergamos.

*Use* 1. This may let all those see their error and corruption who take places, or seek them only for the honour and dignity of them, without either ability for the duties or conscience and care to perform those public duties, only it sufficeth them that they have some faith and fear of God, as other private men have, and never shew themselves faithful in their public places, never regard to do and execute the places. But of few fathers of families can God say as of Abraham; nay, he knows the contrary, that they took the place with no mind to do any such duty, and so execute it still. So of magistrates and ministers; they are brought, or thrust themselves, before they be called, upon the stage of the world, and when they are on it, do no more than make a dumb show, perform no more than lookers on, or but things that must be done of course, and would be though they slept, which is the fault not only of men profane or but civilly honest, but of men who profess the fear of God, and may well be thought to have some good measure of it, and go for good and truly honest men. Yet it is their blemish that they are careless of the duties of their place. That as he said, An evil man may be a good citizen, we may say good men are evil citizens, masters, &c., which blemisheth much their private graces in the sight of God and good men, and upon many hath and doth and will bring particular and temporal judgments from their families and servants, &c.; for this is a grand cause why good men, fathers of families, have such graceless children and corrupt servants, ministers such untoward flocks, magistrates such people.

*Use* 2. This may admonish and instruct all that have the faith and fear of God, to join with it this care of the duties of their place, whatsoever it is. That they must have, because these duties, though they be profitable for the common good, yet are they not acceptable from him. As he (saith *Cyprian sec. de zela et livore*,) that performeth holy things and is not a consecrated priest, doth things, in respect of himself, childish and unprofitable, though they may be good to others; so he that doth things without faith and the fear of God, they are unprofitable, yea, wicked and damnable sins, howsoever they may benefit others, so may I say of these; but yet, this had, will not bear out nor excuse the negligence and not doing the duties of his place. It may make the infirmities of them passed over, but not defend the omitting of them. Therefore, to be accepted of God, men must also be careful of that, masters, &c. The excuses that commonly are pretended will not go for current; servants will not abide with me if I instruct, correct, and restrain them as duty and reason requireth. First, see whether thou art not the cause why they are so untractable, either not seeking by prayer a blessing upon thy government, or dealing hardly and passionately in thy government, as if thou hated them rather than loved good things, or thy servants see thee do contrary to that thou directest them; for if none of these, God will persuade them to be tractable and bend their hearts, or else know that he would have thee purge thy house of them, as David said and did his, of his said lewd servants, lest, as God prospers a bad household for a good servant, so he curse a good household for a bad servant. Ministers' excuses of the untractableness and unwillingness of their people, which may, haply, come from their former negligence or indiscre-

tion, or if God do not bless his labours to them, his reward shall be never a whit the less, nor he less acceptable, so he do his duty. Magistrates and officers, that they shall be accounted busy, officious, and pragmatical, and, it may be, when they are out of their office, they shall have actions against them for this and that usage, they may haply be justly so accounted, because they follow and do things in humour, not in conscience. If they do not, they need not doubt of God's protection and of good success, and should rather fear an action from God than men, besides the loss of the good they may have by doing it. But to all I say, as she said to the heathen king, Do me justice, or else cease to be my king. So let them either do the duties of their places or else never take them, or speedily give them over, and leave to be masters, &c.; or else they must know that if God will not justify he will condemn.

*The law of truth was in his mouth.* He taught the truth and word of God, and nothing but that, and that wholly.

*Doct.* The minister of God must deliver to his people the law of truth, and it only; only the word of God and nothing else: Rev. ii. 7, 'Hear what the Spirit saith.'

*The law of truth was in his mouth.* He taught the truth, and nothing else but the truth, and the whole truth, all the truth, not keeping anything from them.

*Doct.* The minister must deliver to his people the whole truth of God, all his will and counsel, whatsoever he hath commanded and revealed: Lev. x. 11, Deut. v. 27, Mat. xxviii. 20, Acts x. 33, and xx. 27, 35.

*Reason* 1. Because else he cannot be free from the blood of his flock, that is, the perishing or slaughtering of them, *sanguinis, i.e. cædis*, saith Chrysostom, upon Acts xx. 26. For if Paul be free from their blood and from their murder, because, as he said, Acts xx. 26, 27, 'I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have kept nothing back, but have shewed you all the counsel of God;' then will this by the contrary follow.

*Reason* 2. Because else they should not be faithful, neither to him that sent them, nor to them over whom they are set; for what fidelity can there be, when, for their own pleasures or respects, they shall not deliver the whole he commanded, and might be profitable to them? 1 Cor. iv. 2, 'And as for the rest, it is required of the disposers that every one be found faithful.'

*Use* 1. This will cross their opinion who affirm many things in the word are unfit to be delivered and taught to the people, and are ready to scandal and stumble at it, when at any time they are. But if the minister must deliver the whole truth; if, Rom. xv, 4, 'whatsoever things are written aforetime are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;' if, Deut. xxix. 29, 'the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the works of this law:' why should they not be taught? It is certain that many things ought to be spoken wisely, discreetly, in their fit and due times; but yet all things must be delivered. That which Jerome counselled Læta for her daughter, that the book of the Canticles she should read last of all the Scriptures, when without danger she might, lest in reading it in the first place she should be wounded when she was not able to discern spiritual things and spiritual love under carnal words, it may be a rule for all things of the like kind: for as Hilary, Ps. cxxxiv., As an unskilful man coming into a field abounding with wholesome herbs, passes by all, as of no more use than the grass; but a skilful one otherwise; so of the Scriptures.* And as Bernard: Why may I not draw a sweet and wholesome repast of the spirit, out of the sterile and insipid letter, as grain from out the husks, as the nut from out the shell, as the marrow from out the bone?† And as Basil: All bread affords nourishment for health, but of no use ofttimes to the sick or squeamish: so is the Scriptures pure unto the pure; and if any seem unclean and uncomely, it is to those that are such in themselves.‡ For other things that men think unfit to be taught because of the greatness of the mystery, and the depth of them; I say as to the former. If Paul have written of election and reprobation, and hath said, All things that are written are profitable, and are for learning, in the same epistle where he especially handles those things, why should they not be taught, but with wisdom, in their place? That which St Chrosostom speaks in another case, we may apply to this: A petty schoolmaster, that takes a young child from his mother's lap, ignorant yet of all things, only teacheth him his first letters, whom another master takes and instructs after in higher learning; so in the knowledge of the Scriptures. § For as all men cannot dive, and fetch precious stones from the deep, but he that is cunning, and hath the art of it; so not all, but the wise, can either teach or conceive the deep mysteries. First, children must be taught letters, then syllables, after words, then construction, and after all the matter. So is it here.

*Use* 2. This teacheth the minister of God how diligent he ought to be, both in his private state and

* Ut imperitus in agrum salubribus herbis divitem venerit; omnia inutilia et promiscuè genita existimans præteribit; peritus contra; ita de Scripturis.—*Hilar. Ps.* cxxxiv.

† Quidni dulce cruam ac salutare epulum spiritus, de sterili et insipida literâ, tanquam granum de palea, de testa nucleum, de osse medullam.—*Bernard in Cant. Ser.* lxxiii.

‡ Omnis panis nutrimentum affert ad salutem, ægris autem sæpè inutilis; sic et omnis Scriptura mundis munda.—*Basil ad Chyl. de solita vita.*

§ Magister literarum puerulum de gremio matris acceptum et ignarum omnium, primis tantummodo imbuit elementis, quem rursus alius magister accipiens perfectioribus instruit disciplinis.—*Chrys. hom.* ix. *in Gen.*

public preaching, both to find out the whole will and counsel of God, and to deliver it to his people. He must exercise himself in diligent reading of the Scriptures, and comparing of spiritual things with spiritual, as Daniel did, chap.ix.2; his time must not be spent in hunting after profits and preferments, not in idleness, pleasures, and pastimes, more than such recreation as is helpful to make him fit in body and mind for his ministry. *Ars* is *longa*, and *vita* is *brevis*, therefore had he not need to lose no more time than needs must, but spend it so as that the Scripture may dwell in him, by which he may be made perfect to his works, 2 Tim. iii. 17. Then must he be instant to teach it, chap. iv. 2, to deliver the whole counsel of God. But no man knows the whole counsel of God, how can he deliver it to others, and many have not life and time to deliver it? If any man know it not by his own fault, not searching for it, not studying and endeavouring, it will not excuse him, but condemn him the more. If God hide something from him, it is, without doubt, such a thing as is not so profitable to be known or taught, and not required of him. If God shorten his days, and that in the first year or second of his ministry, there is no more required of him than he can perform, so the default be not his.

*Use* 3. To teach the hearers that they must endeavour by diligent hearing to know from the ministers the whole law of God, the whole counsel of God; for therefore must the one teach, that the other may receive it. For he would not have it delivered only because it should be spoken, but that it should be learned and received. If any say they are not able to conceive, and are not capable of it; I answer, Their children at first are not capable all the learning the schoolmaster can teach them; yet at length, and by success and progress, he learns as much as he can teach him, and is fit for a higher school; so may it be with them. The wit and capacity of man is compared by one to the womb of a woman, which at the first is not able to contain the infant, if it were at first conception as perfect for quantity as when it is born, but as parts are added to parts, so is it enlarged; so they, when Christ is formed in them.

*And there was no iniquity found in his lips.* The second commendable part in them; they never taught error, nor deceived his people with lies.

*Doct.* The minister of God must not corrupt the doctrine of religion, nor teach any error unto his people, whether touching knowledge or obedience, in matter of doctrine or manners. If it was Aaron's commendations, it is others' commandment. Hence are the reproofs: Isa. iii. 12, Jer. xxiii. 13, 16, Ezek. xiii. 10, 14, Acts xx. 29, 30, 2 Cor. ii. 17, Gal. i. 8, Jude ver. 13.

*Reason* 1. Because when he exhorteth and persuadeth, he may the better be believed and prevail. For the case is here as in common affairs: once taken in a lie, hardly believed afterwards; so once in an error and uncertain in his judgment, hardly believed again, and things before and after will be doubted of.

*Reason* 2. Because he being a guide of others, a leader of the blind, it is not with him as with another; a private man, whose error may live and die with himself; but it is the hurt of many, even so many as are led by him, who are readier to wander with him, than to walk in the right way after him.

*Use* 1. This sheweth how far the priests of popery are from being true and commendable priests before the Lord, who deliver nothing but lies unto their people. For as they have turned the truth of God into a lie, hardly holding any one point of the truth truly and incorrupt, but having falsified all the truth of God: so that which they specially preach unto the people are lying legends, the false reports of lying and false saints, their lying miracles of foolish, childish, ridiculous, impossible things that were done by them. That Paul said of the Cretians, Tit. i. 12, so I may truly of them. It were infinite and unprofitable to enter particulars. This one thing may sufficiently prove that they have no meaning; the people should be taught the truth, seeing it is manifest they forbid their priests to read such things as they may understand the truth by, to teach the people, or to see more of the truth than ordinary men do. For there was an inhibition by his holiness, that no priest should be allowed to read Bellarmine, because he hath more truly set down the truth, as we hold, and more largely than others have done; therefore none may read him without special licence, lest they should see the truth, and none must be licensed but such as are sufficient grounded priests, that there is no fear they should receive any tincture of the truth, being such obstinate heretics already.

*He walked with me in peace and equity.* The third thing commended in him; his sincere, faithful, and upright walking in his place and calling.

*Doct.* The ministers of God ought to walk with God in peace and equity; that is, to have his conversation so holy, faithful, religious, and godly, that it might be pleasing and acceptable to God, and give him no cause of quarrelling and contending with him. Commended here: so Mat. v. 15, 16, 1 Tim. iv. 12, Tit. ii. 7, 1 Pet. v. 3. The reproofs of all corrupt lives and conversation in the Old and New Testament prove this.

*Reason* 1. Because they are ever to be near unto the Lord, his remembrancers for his people. Now they who must live ever with him and should entreat him for others, they had need be such as he will like of and approve, They who are ever in princes' courts, nigh them, ought to be clad in white and fine apparel; they who must commend the suits of others, had need be in favour and liking themselves.

*Reason* 2. Because they must deliver his will to his people, preach his word and perform his ordinance; which lest they should make to be abhorred for their corruptions, as queasy and full stomachs will do meat

for the sluttishness of the cook, and many the gifts of princes, if the bringers be leprous or have the pest, as the people abhorred the sacrifice because of the wickedness of Eli's sons.

*Use* 1. To reprove the priests of popery, who impropriate unto themselves to be the only priests and ministers of God. To which we may have enough to say out of Bellarmine's defence of John XXIII. (lib. 4, *de Pont. Rom.* cap. 14). He was accused in the Council of Constance for denying the resurrection of the body and everlasting life. Bellarmine's first answer is, that he is not bound to defend him, because he was not certainly and undoubtedly pope; for at that time there were three popes, Gregory XII., Benedict XIII., and John XXIII., and whether was could not be determined, they all had many and singular portions. (A monstrous body, which had three heads or no head.) He answers, secondly, that he had no such error imputed to him for certain; for, saith he, there were fifty-three articles put up against him, but all touching his life and manners, and were proved by witness; and other articles were objected without witness, whereof this was one. Then was he found faulty in his manners in fifty-three crimes. His third answer is, that this was only proved against him by the rumour of the common people, who seeing John of so dissolute a life, begun to think and to speak it abroad that he believed neither eternal life nor the resurrection of the body; for it had been impossible he should have lived so, if he had been persuaded of either. Now if the head be thus, the whole body is sure no better, they so depending upon him as they do. For, to use Pintus's similitude in Isaiah, one of their own against themselves, As in a fish, the head being corrupted and putrefied, the whole body is corrupted, so, saith he, for a commonwealth (ay, for their church); when the principal is corrupted, the other must needs be; and he that would know whether the fish be corrupted, must behold the head, which is first corrupted. So in this.

*Use* 2. To admonish the ministers, that if they would be accepted of God, they must walk faithfully before him, and with him have their conversations sincere, without hypocrisy; upright, without turning aside after the corruptions of the times. They must be as stars fixed in the firmament, that though the clouds be carried up and down with the wind, yet the stars being lift above that region, should remain fixed, seeing God hath taken them into his own tabernacle of heaven, as it were; therefore is it not enough for them to exceed others in knowledge, but they must also surpass them in holiness and piety. They have, or ought to have, more knowledge, after that must be their piety and practice. They come nearer to God, they should be the liker to him. They are the guides of the people, they should go before them, and be not like to our shepherds, which drive their flocks before them, but like the shepherds of the Jews, which went before their flocks; not like him that said *ite*, but to him who said *venite;* how should they else prevail with God for his people, or with the people for their God, when they make themselves unacceptable of God, yea, hateful by their sins, and the offering of God and his service loathsome, and to be abhorred of the people for their corruptions? The Lord forbade to Aaron, and all his for ever, strong drink, Lev. x. 9, forbidding by it all excess which might make them any ways unfit for the service of God. The penalty is death: how shall they escape God's judgments, who are drunkards, deceivers, swearers, and such like?

This commendation given to the priest may teach also a general instruction to all.

*Doct.* Every one that walketh with God cleaveth to him in uprightness, and his worship is acceptable in him.

Some papists would hence gather that a man may be perfect in this life, for out of this will follow, say they, that the high priest was perfect. I answer, that if either they knew themselves or knew the Scripture, they would never gather any such thing; for who knows himself, and finds not himself at the best estate full of corruption? as Saint Paul did, Rom. vii. Or who knows the Scripture, and can be ignorant that he was never yet found since the fall of Adam, which had not his taint and corruption? Not the dearest saint of God. And for the particular, Aaron the high priest had his sin divers times, for he yielded to the people to make a calf, Exod. xxxii.; he ate not the offering according to the law, Lev. x.; and so transgressed, that God threatened and performed it that he should not set foot in the land of Canaan, Num. vi. 2. If this be so, then could he not be perfect.

*Obj.* But how is it true he had no iniquity in his mouth? and James iii. 2, for in many things we sin all; if any man sin not in word, he is a perfect man, and able to bridle all the body.

*Ans.* It is true, if he sin not in his tongue at all; but no such thing is here given unto him; he is made sound in his doctrine, not in his whole speech. A man may be perfect in his place, but never in his person. Again I say, as there is a double justice, so there is a double perfection; one, *legis*, which hath all the points and parts of justice, and all the perfections of all parts, which some call *perfectio graduum obedientiæ*, which was never in any but Christ, and Adam for a while. Another, *evangelii*, which hath all the parts of true justice, but it wants the perfection of those parts; as a child hath all the parts of a true man in the infancy, though it want perfection of stature, and tallness, and strength, which is called of some *perfectio partium*, because all are there in truth; which is nothing else but the conversion of a sinner, with a purpose, will, and endeavour, with integrity and sincerity to please God according to all his commandments. And thus was Job just and perfect, Noah, Zacharias, and Elizabeth, &c.

*He walked with me in peace and equity.* Therefore in peace, because in equity: being upright in his conversation, he had peace with God and peace with himself.

*Doct.* They who walk uprightly, and walk with God in equity and righteousness, they, and they only, walk in peace, shall have true inward peace with God and themselves. To this purpose is that of Isaiah liv. 13, Ps. cxix. 165, John xiv. 27, and x. 33, Philip. iv. 5–7, *è contra* Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

*Reason* 1. Because he is justified; that his uprightness and sanctification sheweth; for it proceedeth from justification, as fruit from the life of a tree. *Bona opera sequuntur justificatum.* Now he that is justified, and he only, hath true inward peace, Rom. v. 1.

*Reason* 2. He that walks not uprightly, can have no assurance of his justification, and so remission of his sins, and so no peace and quietness. A sinner is as a debtor sued to judgment.

*And did turn many away from iniquity.* The fourth thing commended in him, that he laboured so diligently and so effectually, and walked so carefully, that many who were born and bred in sin and iniquity, and continued in it as slaves of Satan, were turned from it to God and godliness.

*Doct.* The minister of God must and ought to turn many from sin and Satan to God and godliness; that is, he ought so to teach, so to labour, and so to walk, that, by the blessing of God upon his endeavours, many may be gained to God out of the bondage of sin and Satan, be called and converted unto God. This is given unto the word, Ps. xix. 7, in the minister's preaching of it, Rom. x. 14, Isa. xlix. 5, Ezek. iii. 17, &c., and xxxiii. 7, &c., Mat. xxviii. 19, Acts xviii. 9, 10, 2 Tim. ii. 24–26.

*Reason* 1. Because he shall be free from their blood and perishing, not only if he convert, but if he so labour as they may be converted, though they never be; for it not being in his power to work upon the heart, and to alter it, if he do what he can by all means to the outward man, he is free; else he must be culpable and guilty of his perishing. If in Ezekiel's parable, chap. xxxiii., a watchman set up of themselves, shall answer for their bodies, if they perish for want of warning, what shall he do that is set up of God?

*Reason* 2. Because, if God do make his labour effectual, his honour shall be the more. I cannot say as Chrysostom, *Non minus præmii*, if he come without them, he shall not lose his labour, but less sure, because of that, Dan. xii. 3, 'And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.'

*Use* 1. This reproveth and condemneth all preachers and ministers, who do not labour so in doctrine, and live so in practice, that men may be converted to God from iniquity; but by negligence and corruption, suffer men to remain still in their sins, yea, harden them in their iniquities. They are far from their duty, and far unlike to these priests, who were thus approved and commended of God.

*Use* 2. To teach all ministers so to preach, and so to live, that they may convert men to God, and turn them from iniquity. They must exhort, improve, and rebuke with all meekness, long-suffering, constancy, and courage, that there may be nothing in them, why they should not be turned. This is his duty, and he that is a priest, and rebukes not delinquents, he forsakes the office of a priest. In the doing of it faithfully, he may well expect a blessing from God; because of that, Isa. lv. 10, 11, 'Surely, as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it might give seed to the sower, and bread to him that eateth; so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I will, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it.' And if he do waste himself, hazard his life, and spend his strength, and gain but one, or few, it will be the recompence of his labour. The captain that redeems and recovers but one captive, whose freedom is desired by his prince, shall not lose his reward, though he shall have greater that recovers more. So in this, Dan. xii. 3. And if God do not bless his labours, yet if he be not wanting in his duty, care, and endeavour, but be found wise and faithful, he shall be rewarded. Isa. xlix. 5, 'And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, that I may bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.'

*Use* 3. This may teach us why the ministry of the word, and the ministers of it, are so harsh and so unacceptable unto most men, if they be faithful, and will seek by all means to convert men to God; because they must turn them from their sin, separate them and their iniquities, which they love so dearly, as Micah vi. 7. Sin is either natural, or by custom, or both; natural diseases are almost incurable, and no less diseases that grow into a custom, which is another nature. And the physician that should go about to cure these against a man's will, should have little thank for his pains, and be not greatly welcome, when such things cannot be removed without most sharp and bitter medicines, great pain and grief. So in this. And here is the cause why many a man's ministry, at the first coming to a place, is very acceptable for a while, because he speaks things good and wholesome, but somewhat generally, because he knows not the state of his flock and people; but after he hath lived some years, and sees their sins, and begins to speak home unto them, then is he unacceptable, because he would part them and their sins. As that minister that should persuade a divorce betwixt a man and his wife

which he loves most dearly, should never be welcome to his house or company, so in this. It may be it is but the same he hath often spoke of before, but then it was borne, because they probably conjectured he meant not them; but when he hath been a while with them, that it is like he may know them to be guilty of that sin, though haply, and ten to one, he did not, then is it tolerable,* because they think he would separate them and their beloved sin, their profitable and delightful sin. All the while he will preach peace and comfortable things to them, and bring the word of reconciliation, and tell them of God's love, and God's mercy, and that he is sent to woo them to be married to God; all that while he shall be kindly welcome. As he that should sue for a prince, to win the love of a woman to him, all the while he tells of his honour and riches, and beauty, and such things, he shall be kindly welcome; but if he come to tell her, that she must separate herself from some place and company she loves well, and change her manners, and forsake her friends and father's house, he shall find his entertainment, both for usage and countenance, changed; so in this. Which makes oftentimes ministers, if they be not the more faithful, grow cold and careless, and so fall into many grievous sins.

*And turn many from iniquity.* In themselves and of themselves by nature, they were in iniquity, carnal, and sold under sin, Rom. vii., till the minister by the word brings them out of it, and turns them to God from sin, and makes them his.

*Doct.* 1. No man naturally is God's, but a slave to sin and Satan, till he be turned and converted by the preaching of the word, and work of the ministry.

*Turn from iniquity.* Their conversion to God, and their calling, is thus noted, by turning from iniquity. To note this unto us.

*Doct.* 2. Those who are duly called and converted, are turned from their sin and corruption; that is, washed, cleansed, and purged from them, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Ver. 7. *For the priests' lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.*

*For the priests' lips.* In this verse is the reason of the precedent duties required in others, and commended in those with whom God made his covenant at first, generally commanding a duty of the priest, or a double duty, because by knowledge and law some understand two several things. It depends upon the former thus, These things he ought to do, for he ought to be a man of knowledge, &c. Some read them, *doth preserve*, in the present tense, but commonly it is read in the future. Not to note out a promise, as if the priests' lips should never err, but should be so kept, that he might not err. But it is a commandment, shewing how he ought to be qualified.

* Qu. 'intolerable'?—ED.

*Shall keep.* It is not, saith St Jerome, shall bring forth, or produce, for that was spoken before; but shall keep, that he may speak it and produce it in time, and may give his fellow-servants their portion in due time. Some take knowledge here for the understanding of the spritual and heavenly mysteries, as the law after, for the rule of the composing of their manners and actions. And these are said to be the priests, because they must study the books of divine wisdom, by which they become more wise and more learned than the rest of the people.

*And they should seek the law at his mouth.* That is, they ought to require from his mouth who ought to teach it them, Lev. x. 9–11; 1 Tim. iii., Titus i. The law, saith Bernard (lib. ii., *de consid.*), *Non nugas profecto, vel fabulas;* not toys and fables. S. Cyril, *Ait nomine legis contineri omnium ad bene vivendum necessariorum cognitionem.*

*For he is the messenger of the Lord.* This is a reason for confirmation of the former; he must be a man of wisdom and knowledge, because he is one God hath made choice of, to be his messenger to carry and declare his will unto his people. He is called *Angelus;* not that he was so by nature, but by office.

In the verse we observe two things, two duties, and one reason enforcing both. The first is the minister's duty: he must be a man of knowledge, learning and understanding.

*Doct.* The minister of God, he that is to go in and out before God's people, ought to be a man of learning, knowledge, and understanding in the word of God, and of the mysteries there delivered. It is so here commanded. This Elisha knew well, therefore, 2 Kings ii. 9, he asked a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Mat. xiii. 52, 'Every scribe which is taught unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things both new and old.' Therefore are they compared to stars, Rev. ii. 1; made the light of the world, Mat. v. 14. To prove that stars should have light, that the eye should have sight, were needless; for all know and will confess it, Titus i. 9. God's stewards, of whom as they must be faithful, 1 Cor. iv. 2, so also skilful, seeing he hath the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Haggai i. 13; he is the Lord's messenger, 2 Cor. v. 20, in God's stead.

*Reason* 1. Because he is God's messenger, as Paul, 1 Cor. v. 20, God's ambassador. Now necessarily it follows, that the messenger and ambassador of a prince should know and understand his master's will, what he is to speak and deliver in the name of him that sent, to those to whom he was sent; so in this.

*Reason* 2. Because he ought to instruct the ignorant, to strengthen the weak, to exhort and excite the slow and cold, to confirm the truth, to confute error, and improve them that speak against the truth, being every way both able and apt to teach, as the tenor of the epistles to Timothy and Titus do run.

But this cannot be done, except he be a man of knowledge and understanding of the word.

*Use* 1. This admonisheth all those, who are by God and man, God and his church, put in trust, and credited with the choice and election of fit men for this calling and function, that they impose not hands upon any, neither admit any to this place, but such as are able men, such as, after trial and examination, are found fit and sufficient for it. If they lay their hands suddenly and foolishly upon any, they shall be partakers of their sins, and not be pure, as 1 Tim. v. 22. And where sin cleaves to the hand, the rod and judgment will be upon the back. The general that, for his proper gain or private respects, shall admit captains, and colonels, and marshals, for the leading of several bands, which have no skill in war and martial affairs, that, when the field is to be fought, are not able to lead their bands and to go in and out before them, can never answer it to their prince if it be known that this is the cause why the battle succeeds so badly, why so many perished and the enemy gathered ground upon him; so in this. I think too many may say of those whom they have ordained, as Marcianus said, when he heard how Sabbatius demeaned himself, whom he had ordained a presbyter, It had been better he had laid his hand upon thorns, than by the imposition of his hands to have designed Sabbatius to the degree of a presbyter.*

*Use* 2. This reproveth those who think any body sufficient for the ministry. As corrupt patrons and parents, and such like; ungodly patrons to enrich themselves, and better their state and portion, think anybody sufficient to discharge, if he can change Peter's voice, Acts iii. 6, 'Silver and gold have I store;' or if he want that, if he can part stakes, and divide it, take thirds, or stand to his courtesy, though he have not a whit of Elisha's spirit, nor any knowledge in his lips; such a one, if they may be judges, there is none to him, as David said of Goliah's sword, and more fit than one that hath Elisha's double spirit doubled upon him, and will look as he may to have that which God hath given him. If we will make them judges, either the apostle Paul forgot himself, or the printer, by negligence, left out a word, 2 Cor. ii. 16, for it should be, 'Who is *not* sufficient for these things?' But these Jeroboams, which bring in ministers of the lower sort of the people because they fill the hand, shall have Jeroboam's punishment,† 1 Kings xiii. 33, 34. Like to these are carnal parents, who bring up their children only so far as they may be capable by the law of a living, but care not for other sufficiency, only, perhaps, for credit and compliment sake, that they be able now and then to make a sermon in some place of honour and fame. And they will provide and purchase livings and benefices for them, and thrust them into them. To these and their like I may apply that, Dan. i. 10. And to these may I adjoin those ministers which themselves having knowledge, yet I know not out of what corruption it cometh, they think a few men of learning is enough, if a few parishes in a city or country have learned men and preachers, as if all ministers should not be men of knowledge.

*Use* 3. To reprove all ministers who are ignorant, whose lips have not knowledge; who, though they should be good scribes, yet are as ignorant of the word of God, as Samuel was in his childhood of the voice of God, 1 Sam. iii. 4. So unable are they for that place. Like to Balaam, Num. xxii., that though God forbade him, yet for gain he would needs go. So these, for the wages of iniquity, whenas God by denying them gifts, hath said, Go not, yet they will threap kindness of him, and will go. As Ahimaaz, 2 Sam. xviii. 23, that would needs run to carry the king news from the camp, but when he came he knew nothing; so these, needs must they be ministers of the gospel, messengers of glad tidings, such as will carry news from the king to the camp; but when they come to tell their message, they know nothing, no more, or often not so much as many of their flocks; as Hosea, iv. 4.

*Use* 4. To admonish every man how he takes this calling upon him, that he find in himself some competent sufficiency for it, not to be persuaded by friends, drawn by others, not thinking it is enough when he hath the calling of the church, for he must be a man of knowledge. These things may increase other men's sins, but not lessen his own, for he must be accepted by that is in him; therefore must he be studious, and of some competent parts before, and still continue in reading, and look to learning, as 1 Tim. iv. 13, 16. For he shall find himself still bound to study, and to have need of it daily, for so great a work to find out knowledge for his people, the word being so deep as it is (Bernard).

*Obj.* Whether, if he have not gifts, not knowledge, is he a minister or not?

*Ans.* He is, though not such as he should, as he is a minister which is corrupt and lewd, though not as he should.

From these words some of our papists do gather that the priests could not err; and so by consequent not now the bishops nor a council. The reason is, because this is a promise, and God keeps his promises.

To this I answer, It is no promise, but a commandment, shewing what manner of man a minister ought to be. The same which the next sentence is.

Again, I affirm, that if it be a promise, it is general; for the reason is general to all, yea, and particular to every one. But the Scripture is manifest, that both particular priests, and general councils of priests, have

* Multo fuisse satius manus suas in spinas imposuisse, quam earum impositione Sabbatium ad gradum designasse presbyterii.—*Marcianus.*

† Qui potestatem facit volenti ecclesiam corrumpere, is certè author fuerit eorum omnium quæ perdita illius audacia turbaverit.—*Chrysost. de Sacerd*, 3.

erred.* In general are these, Isa. lix. 10, Jer. vi. 13, and xiv. 14, which places shew, that the most of the priests and prophets were then corrupt. Now if there should have been a council gathered of these, what good might be hoped for from them? By going to the council, they might have changed their places, but not their minds; they would have been the same in a council they were at home. Besides, is it not manifest that councils have erred? 1 Kings xxii. But Bellarmine haply will answer, they were a council of prophets, not priests, gathered by the king, not the high priest. Then see a council of priests, gathered by the high priest, erring, John ix. 22, and xi. 53, and Mark xiv. 64. But Bellarmine will say, that a council of the Jews lawfully called before Christ, could not err; but he being come, they might. The ground must be, because they are not priests, neither the high priest; but this is false, for the priesthood of Aaron was not abolished till Christ became a priest, which was not till his sacrifice; for if they had been, then had he sinned in communicating with them. And if this were so, it were marvel how the Rhemists, and the general popish argument will hold, who by the example of Caiaphas, John xi. 49, proves that the pope cannot err, though he be wicked; for if he were not a high priest, then holds not this argument; but he was a high priest, and they all priests, and yet they erred, and so may it err. More ingeniously deal Hosius and Canus, affirming the council did pronounce a right sentence, when they condemned Christ of blasphemy, that they might establish this, a council cannnot err!

*And they should seek the law at his mouth.* The commandment touching the people, shewing what they ought to do.

*Doct.* The people of God, and they who be of his church, must hear and receive the word of God at the mouth of the ministers. It is not spoken exclusively, as if these must only hear from the minister, and not to read themselves; for that is commanded, John v. 39, but principally they must hear it from him, and ordinarily when he speaketh the word, they must not withdraw themselves, but must hear. This is the order God hath ordained in his church; this is that is commanded here; so Haggai ii. 12, so James i. 16, Isa. ii. 3. To God's house to hear and be taught, there speak the ministers, Heb. xiii. 17. Then must they be heard.

*Reason* 1. Because they are begotten and born again of the seed of the word, but that not by their own private reading, but from the preaching of the ministers, 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. They are the sons of God by faith, Gal. iii. 26. But faith is not to be had, ordinarily, but by hearing, Rom. x. 14, 15, 17.

*Reason.* 2. Because, as Chrysostom (Hom. xi. ad pop. Antioch), *Se quisque per seipsum non facile emendare potest.* Men are so partial in judgment, so perverse in affection, oftentimes blinded by one means or another, they see not what is fit for them; and if anything dislike them, not willing to take it to them, then had they need of another.

*Use* 1. This will convince of sin all those who hold, either in opinion or practice, no such necessity of resorting to the public congregations, where the law is to be had from the mouth of the ministers; for if it be a duty that they should, then must it be a sin to think they ought not, and to withdraw themselves from it, contemning the ministry of the word, being the ordinance of God, by which he would teach them the law. Their pretences they hold forth in their defence are vain. First, they can read at home, and it may be better sermons than he they should hear can preach any. Let me grant them they can; yet follows it not they will; for he that accounts little of God's public ordinance will hardly perform any such private duty, man's nature being more apt to public than private duties. But say they can, and will, and do it; yet is it faulty, because it is cross to God's commandment, who could as well have commanded private at that time as public. And though it be in itself good, yet being out of its fit time, it is evil. It is good and lawful for a man to follow his calling, or to build churches, or to get in his harvest, or to recreate himself in their times; but to do these upon the Lord's day is evil. As in the body the blood, that is the continent of life, is good, so it be in the proper vessels, the veins; but if out, it is hurtful, and breeds putrefactions and diseases; and as all the members are good in their proper place, but one in another is monstrous and hurtful; as the finger upon the hand, and in the eye: so it is of these things. Again, what is this but to cross the ordinance of God? What is it else but to challenge more wisdom to themselves than God hath, who hath commanded it, who hath given pastors and teachers to the church, who hath bid them preach in season and out of season?

Secondly, They are begotten already, therefore they need not hear. Nay, they are therefore not begotten, because they think it needless. For there cannot be life but there will be a desire of food. They cannot

* The Council of Chalcedon, not denied to be a lawful council, equalled the bishop of Constantinople with the bishop of Rome in authority, honour, and other prilvileges, save only in precedence, which they say is an error.

The first Council of Nice decreed, that those heretics who followed Paulus Samosatenus, should again be baptized, as Cyprian and the Anabaptists.

The second of Nice decreed, that images should be worshipped, and that angels had bodies, and that the souls of men were corporal. Why else did Augustine appeal from the Council of Africa, where Cyprian was present, to the Scriptures, affirming, we may not doubt of the Scriptures, but of them it is lawful? (lib. ii. *de Baptist. con. Donatist.* cap 3.)

*Concilia plenaria errare posse, dicens.* If the question be of the authority of the pope, whether greater than a council. Jerome answers, *Si authoritas quæritur, major orbis est urbe.* But ask the Council of Constance, which deposed John XXIII. and chose Martin V. Either the council erred, or else Martin was no lawful pope. Then all his successors were schismatics, no lawful popes.

be God's, but they have his Spirit; and where his Spirit is, there cannot be contempt of his ordinance; but it argues they have not his Spirit, nor are not begotten.

Thirdly, you cannot prove we ought to hear so often. Thou must learn and hear from him the whole law of God, which cannot be heard in a man's life in so seldom hearing as they can be content only to hear, and much less learned. If they must hear out of season, then oftener than they would or do. But shall I tell you the true cause of this refusal? It is either pride of heart, whereby they are puffed up with their own knowledge and condition, and think they know as much and need no more, and are, as the speech is, as well as meat can make them, which is plain hypocrisy; or it is pride of state, when they are puffed up with their wealth and state, and think it enough for the poor to receive the gospel and press upon it; it is not for their state and worship to be over-attendant, to strive and thirst after the word; they come more to honour the word, or to be well thought of by men, than for any good they look to receive by it, which is a spice of atheism; or it is because of the guilt of their consciences, who find the galling of the word, who think if they should continually hear it they should have no quietness in themselves at all, when they can hardly quiet themselves that hear so seldom, which is carnal security; or else he that hath them in a snare at his will is afraid to lose them, and when he finds that one sermon makes Agrippa almost a Christian, he is afraid of a constant hearing, lest they should become Christians altogether, and he be cast out; knowing the preacher is the power of salvation.

*Use* 2. To teach every one to make conscience of this duty, to hear and receive the word of God at the mouth of his ministers in the public assemblies. It is the commandment of God; he that maketh not conscience of this duty maketh not conscience of any; for he that maketh no conscience of all known duties, maketh none of any. Therefore should we be glad with David to go into the house of God, so shall we subscribe to the wisdom of God, who hath so ordained, and given men gifts, not in vain, not for themselves; whenas little would save them, but as teats to the mother, and art to the bee to make honey, &c.; so shall we be begotten of God to be sons, or reformed of God to be holy sons, or repaired by God, who decay in mind as well as in body, and had need of continual instruction as of daily eating. For our work is not like others', saith St Chrysostom, who find it as they left it.

*They should seek the law.* This is the commandment touching the people, that they must receive the law from the minister's mouth; and not only receive it, but seek or require it, as it were exact it, as men do for their due, or as servants require their portion from the steward when he was slack in giving.

*Doct.* The people must not only hear and receive the word of God at the mouth of the ministers, but they must seek it and require it; seek it with earnestness and fervent desire. So here; and to the same purpose is that, when the Spirit speaks of buying the truth, Prov. xxiii. 23, and Isa. lv. 1. And hence are the comparisons, when it made as milk, and men as new-born babes, 1 Peter ii.; when it is compared to gold, Rev. ii. 18; to a treasure, and men to purchasers, Mat. xiii. 44; to pearls, and men to merchants, vers. 45, 46.

*Reason* 1. Because it is that which will make men rich spiritually, with riches of faith and piety, and such like; which had, will enrich men, will they seek very earnestly.

*Reason* 2. Because here Christ, and with him eternal life and all happiness, is to be found, and nowhere else: John v. 39, 'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think to have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.' Rom. x. 6–8. Hence John vi. 67, 68, 'Jesus said to the twelve, Will ye also go away? Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' Hence the gospel is 'the grace of God bringing salvation,' Titus ii. 11.

*Reason* 3. Because without this, whatsoever a man hath else, whatsoever state and condition he is in, better or worse, health or sickness, &c., he can use no state well; for the blessings of God, 1 Tim. iv. 5, are sanctified by the word.

*Use.* To convince of sin all such, as though they hear, yet seek not nor desire it, have no fervent affection to it.

*The law.* That is, the simple and plain words of God, not trifles, and fables, and other vanities of wit, but the whole law, whatsoever he is bound to deliver.

*Doct.* The people ought to hear and receive, to seek and desire the law, the pure law, and the whole law from the ministers. As before, the minister ought to deliver all; so here, they must affect and receive all. So is it here; and to the same purpose is that, Isa. i. 3. For the whole law is his way. This is proved, Deut. v. 27, Mat. xxviii. 20, 1 Thess. v. 20, 21, Heb. vi. 1, 2. This by the contrary, Mat. ii. 11, 2 Tim. iii. 4.

*Reason* 1. Because they are his people, servants, children, spouse, all which requires they should hear and affect his words, his laws, his will and his precepts, and them all.

*Reason* 2. Because the whole is either concerning God or themselves. God, as it setteth forth his wisdom, power, justice, mercy, and so forth; themselves, as it offers mercy or threateneth judgment, as it reproveth evil or promiseth good.

*Use* 1. This will serve to reprove many, and to convince several men of several corruptions, some in one sin, and some in another, who will hear, and seem to desire the law out of the minister's mouth, but not the

whole. There are some who think many things needless to be known and heard, many things not fit to be taught, as before, ver. 6. Besides that was then said, I say, let them see if this be not to check the wisdom of God, who hath both written and preserved the whole to the church; and if pride did not transport them beyond themselves, it could not be they should be so affected. As wisdom would teach them that many things are necessary, though not the present profit of them appear. For as in instruments only the strings sound, yet there are other things in the whole body, as that whereunto they are tied, the bridge, the pins, which help the music. So in the prophets, though all be not prophecies, yet they are things to which these are tied and illustrated (Aug. *de Civ. Dei*, lib. xvi. 2). And sometimes for those things which signify something, are those things which signify nothing added. As the ground is only ploughed and rent up by the ploughshare, yet that this may be, other parts of the plough are necessary. And humility, if they had any, would teach to suspect their own wisdom in not seeing the use and end, the profit and fitness of things, rather than questioning and reasoning against God. Others can be content to hear all pleasant things, as the promises and mercies of God; but judgments and reproofs, threats and checks, that they cannot brook; like unto those who, in medicines affect only the smell, or trimness, or gayness of them, as pills rolled in gold, but cannot away with the force of purging and preserving. And see not that a great company more go to hell by presuming in their lives than by despairing at their deaths. Some can willingly hear that which concerns other men and their sins, their lives and manners, but nothing touching themselves at all and their own sins: as men can willingly abide to hear of other men's deaths, but cannot abide to hear of their own. Oftentimes they will make the minister to believe as they did, Jer. lxii. 5, 6, 'Then they said to Jeremiah, The Lord be a witness of truth and faith between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good or evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.' But when he shall declare unto them the will of God that crosseth their affections, they will entertain him, and answer, as chap. xliii. 2, 'Thou speakest falsely, the Lord hath not sent thee to say thus.' These, and such like, are here reproved and convinced of the breach of this duty, that they receive not, nor desire the law of God.

*Use* 2. To admonish every one to labour for hearts willing and desirous to receive the whole law and word of God, as he shall put it into the mouths of the ministers to dispose it unto them, whatsoever it may be, whether it may be pleasant or crossing. For if men deal so with their physicians, submit themselves to their prescripts, though often they be unpleasant, because they are persuaded of their wisdom, and that they work all by art, and yet may they sometimes err; how much more unto all that which God hath spoken and prescribed, when they may well know they cannot err, judging of such thoughts as esteemeth anything superfluous or unfit, anything difficult or too deep for them to look into, as suggestions of Satan and their own corruption, and not rising from God's Spirit; condemning in themselves all such thoughts as gainsay the word, and any part of it delivered unto them, as unloyal to their prince and master, father and husband; yea, censuring all such affections as gainsay and repine at the word, which toucheth them to the quick, and their particular sins and corruptions, as fearful forerunners of some dangerous fall and backsliding, specially when in former times they could endure as much as that, and haply more, to be spoken unto them, or were such as condemned other men for spurning when they were touched. And, indeed, it is fearful, for it argues he was either an hypocrite before, or else, by reason of some security and carelessness over his own spiritual estate, he is fallen into a spiritual disease and some sins he had not before; and refusing the remedies or the bitter potion which should recover him, he must needs putrify more. The body that is sick, and the part that is wounded, if either the remedy be rejected, or the salve be pulled off when it is applied, will doubtless grow worse. As he that is sore sick, and grievously wounded, gives hope of his recovery while he will submit himself to his physician, and take whatsoever he prescribes him. But he that is but a little ill, and refuseth to hearken or receive anything, gives no hope at all though his hurt be the less; so in this. Therefore, men who would save themselves must receive the whole. They who will shew themselves dutiful and loyal, either his spouse or children, must be content to be reproved and chid, when they have given cause, and never love the less, as well as cherished. And it is a good sign of a good heart that likes his ministry best which will reprove and chide him, and not his that will soothe and flatter him.

*For he is the messenger of the Lord.* The reason of the former. The priest is God's messenger, therefore must he be such and such.

*Doct.* The Lord, he useth the ministry of man in revealing his will to his people, Rev. iii. 14.

Ver. 8. *But ye are gone out of the way; ye have caused many to fall by the law: ye have broken the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.*

*But ye are gone out of the way.* Or, *Ye have departed from that way.* The second part of this dissimilitude follows now in this and the next verse, which contains their degenerating, and so their corruption, ver. 8; and the iteration of the judgment, ver. 9. And in ver. 8 here are three corruptions these

priests be challenged withal, wherein they are most unlike to the former priests. 'You are gone out of that way,' that is, from the piety and faithfulness of those priests who lived in the first age, and with whom I made the covenant at first. They neither swerved from that rule, but you have forsaken and contemned my law, and followed your own devices, and sought yourselves, and the establishing of your dignity, more than my glory, and have sought how to make a gain to yourselves of my worship. You have done this, who have the same place, enjoy the same privileges, have the same portion of tithes and offerings they had.

*Ye have caused many to fall by the law.* The second difference and dissimilitude. That whereas the former priests, by their care and diligence in their places, recovered and caused many to return from their sins, and the breaches of the law, and to walk uprightly by it; they, on the contrary, by their defect and want in teaching, and their passing over their sins as if they saw them not, that they might purchase grace, and procure commodity to themselves; as also by their wicked example, they were the cause of the fall of many; that is, that many have sinned and were not punished, as the word sometime signifies. By the law, is not meant as if they did so teach and temper the law, as sometime the priests did, in giving liberty by it to sin, as to hate their enemies, to lust and covet, so nothing were outwardly acted; but that they caused many to stumble and go contrary to the law.

*Ye have broken the covenant of Levi.* The third difference. They kept my covenant and were faithful, and I performed whatsoever I promised to them; but you have broken covenant, and gone clean contrary to the agreement which passed betwixt me and your predecessors, in whose loins you were, and who made the covenant for you; and so by your iniquities have caused me not to perform to you peace, plenty, and prosperity, with length of days. From the general I observe this:

*Doct.* Men, of what sort and condition soever they be, ought to imitate and follow the virtue, piety, and faith of their predecessors, whether they were in place, nature, or age. And on the contrary, it is a great wickedness and shame to degenerate from their piety and virtue, to be unlike unto them. Therefore reproves our prophet these priests. To this purpose is that Heb. vi. 12, and xiii. 7, and xii. 1, inferred upon the xi. and James v. 11. Hence was the commendations of Jehoshaphat, 1 Kings xxii. 43; and of Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 2. On the contrary, it was reproved in Jehoram, 2 Chron. xxi. 12; and in the Jews, John viii. 39.

*Reason* 1. Because God hath therefore written these. He hath written not that they should be known as matter of story, to be made for delight or speech only, but for matter of life and conversation, thereby teaching us what to do in others whose memory is new and fresh, that God may have his end.

*Reason* 2. Because it will not profit them to have descended from or succeeded such; for, as he said of nobility, What profiteth it a channel or river flowing from a pure and wholesome spring, if it be corrupt and defiled? Nay, it will the more condemn them, as we may well gather from that Mat. xii. 41, 42.

*Use* 1. Then are they justly reproved, who talk of doing as their forefathers have done, being neither willing nor able to examine what they did, good or evil, but is all one to them, so they did it before them. Such as our ignorant papists be, who imitate not the faith, but the infidelity and errors of their fathers; not their virtues and piety, but their vices and profaneness, their liberty and licentiousness. No man will condemn their following of that is good in them, or rather that which had but the show of goodness in them, as their works which were good for the outward act, though not otherwise; their works of mercy and liberality, their zeal, fervency, and diligence in prayer, though their prayers not to be imitated; as a man may imitate the diligence and watchfulness of a thief, but not his theft; the providence of a bad servant, but not his corruption. But to imitate anything they have done without choice of their good, is that which is justly condemned; for if the apostle must not, nor will not, be otherwise followed, than 1 Cor. xi. 1, as he follows Christ; if the prophet forbid us to follow our fathers; if they are condemned for following their forefathers, as did all the kings of Israel; if that be the commendations of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xvii. 3, that he walked in the first way of his father David, and not that he imitated him in all things, is it approvable to follow those who are far inferior to him in all things? Nay, it is that which shall improve their sin and enhance their punishment, as Isa. xiv. 21, with lxv. 7.

*Use* 2. To provoke us to read the Scriptures, where we may see the truth, and patience, and piety of our most holy predecessors; and when we see them, to provoke ourselves to imitate them, and to uphold ourselves in right paths by them, Heb. xiii. 1.

*But ye are gone out of the way.* They had erred from the truth and good ways of their predecessors.

*Doct.* The rulers, governors, and ministers of the church may err both in matter of doctrine and of God's worship. Let us look into the book of God and we shall find this true, not in some one or two, but in the greatest part of them; yea all, for aught we know. First, these things were foretold, for, though the people bragged, Jer. xviii. 18, 'The law should not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise,' God threatened the far contrary, Ezek. vii. 26, and Micah iii. 6, 'That the sun should go down over the priest.' And see the event of this, Isa. lvi. 10, Zeph. iii. 4, Jer. vi. 13 and xxiii. 13. But this was in Israel only; yea, see it in Judah, Jer. xxiii. 14, 16; and not in prophets only, but priests, 2 Chron. xxxvi 14.

*Reason* 1. Because their knowledge, be it never so

great, is but in part and imperfect,* 1 Cor. xiii. 9. Now, they who are ignorant in part may err in some things. *Ignorantia erroris mater*, (Bernard ad Cant); *Nisi ignorando errare non potest*, (August. Enchirid.). Seeing all men are in part ignorant, then they may err; yea the priest, Heb. v. 2.

*Reason* 2. Because they are but in part sanctified, and every man hath some part of the old man in him, as St Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 5, who had gone as far as any other, confesseth of himself, Philip. iii. 12, 13, Rom. vii. 17, 24. Therefore they may in part strive against their own judgment, and be drawn by temptation to defend error, sometime against their own conscience; for though error in judgment arise ever of ignorance, yet error in act, as in teaching, in defending and maintaining of error, is joined often with knowledge, and ariseth not out of ignorance, but want of grace and sanctification.

*Reason* 3. Because the promise of incessant assistance and infallible guidance was never made to any but to the apostles, because they were to plant churches where there never had any been before, and to establish a new form of church government and worship of God never used or heard of before; therefore to them, John xiv. 26 and xvi. 13, which was not a perfect and absolute illumination, which the apostle professeth he had not, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, but an infallible suggestion of things as occasion required, which is understood not of things that were expedient for them to know as Christians nor as teachers, which they had already, but as apostles, to be planters of new churches and new government. Now, that this was promised to them only, I prove, for it is added 'He will shew you the things to come,' a privilege that no pope or patriarch ever durst challenge; and if not this will pass by virtue of that promise, why the other, when they are both in one and the same promise? Therefore it was to them alone; yea, not so much as the extraordinary prophets of the Old Testament had it either promised or performed, as Greg. *super* 1 Reg. iii. 8 observeth; for they had not the spirit extraordinarily always infallibly guiding them, save when they came with some special message from God, which is manifest by the error of Nathan when he was out of his message, 2 Sam. vii. 3. And of him that was deluded by the false prophet after he had done his message to Jeroboam, and made to transgress the commandment of the Lord, 1 Kings xiii. 2, 18, 19, which he would not have done if he had not been deceived; for before he would not do it for all the king's offer, vers. 7, 8, and in Jer. xlii. 4, 7.

*Use*. This serves to confute the doctrine of popery, who hold that the church cannot err, nor a council, which is the representative church. But they have brought it to a narrower scantling, for the question is wholly about one; for whatsoever they talk of church or councils, it cometh in conclusion all home to the pope. He it is alone that cannot err; for the church, they grant that any particular church in the world may err, save the Church of Rome; and that, too, if the pope should translate his see from Rome, as Peter did from Antioch thither (Bell. de Pont. Rom. iv. 4); for councils, that a general council may err if the pope do not confirm it (Ibid. iv. 3). And *è contra*, (Idem. de Conc. author. ii. 2, 5). But if all be true that we have shewed, he may err. But Bellarmine *de Pontif.* Rom. iv. 3 proveth he cannot; for Luke xxii. 32, 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not;' and so for the pope, and so he cannot err! It is answered, first, that by faith is not here meant an historical faith, but a justifying faith; not a general faith, but a particular; nor that by which we believe God, but in God, which fails not by error, so it be not fundamental (for so should we condemn all who ever have lived), but when a man doth fall wholly from grace, and ceaseth to be a member of Christ. And that it is so appears out of the drift and scope of our Saviour Christ, for his drift was to arm and protect Peter against that trial and temptation that he then foretold him of; not against error in teaching the church, but against apostasy in time of trial. Therefore saith Theophilact, *in Lucam*, he sheweth him the particular temptation, for our Saviour would not arm there where he was not to be hurt, where there was no danger; not put an helmet upon the head when the heart and breast was to be stricken. And thus much Bellarmine confesseth, when he makes Peter's fall to be a matter of fact, to cast utterly off his former profession, and not of faith; and therefore it was perseverance in the habit of justifying faith, not infallibility in the matter of historical faith, that Christ prayed for; which so differs that a man may have the one, that is justifying faith, and yet hold an error not fundamental to the death, as Bellarmine contends for the fathers, divers of them; and the other, that is a right belief of the general points of religion, and yet not have justifying faith nor saving and sanctifying grace, as Bellarmine contendeth the pope cannot err, and yet confesseth he may want saving grace.

Secondly, it is answered that that he prayed for here was a thing not proper to Peter, but common to all the apostles, yea, all the elect; and if the gift and grace be common to all, and conceived, John xvii. 9, 10, 20, by the same person in effect the same for all, upon which ground the ancient fathers apply this place to all the apostles, yea, to all the elect; and if to all, then helps it them but a little.

The second proof he cannot err is Mat. xvi. 18, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church,' whence they first reason that the foundation and roof of the church cannot err, such as Peter and the popes his successors. I say nothing that it is not yet proved that the pope is Peter's successor; nay, it is manifest that he succeeded rather Simon Magus than Simon

* Vulgare illud; maxima pars eorum quæ scimus, et minima pars eorum quæ ignoramus.

Peter; but I say that Peter is not the rock. In the words, saith Augustine, there is difference betwixt *petrus* and *petra* both in the Greek and Latin. Again, the rock here is not Peter, but Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4 and iii. 11, whereunto agree the fathers and their own writers, and also late writers, whereby all colour of argument taken from this place for the pope is utterly quashed. But grant that they beg, then must it either be in regard of his person;—but that cannot be, for the church cannot be builded upon flesh and blood;—or in regard of some superiority and place above the rest;—but as that cannot be proved, so the contrary is manifest, 2 Cor. xii. 11;—or of his doctrine taught by him, and of the faith of Christ confessed by him, and so it is true. Now this was common to him and all the rest; for as John is called a pillar, Gal. ii. 9, so was James as well as Peter, and all the rest, as Rev. xxi. 14. To which is that, Eph. ii. 20, with whom the prophets are joined, because they writ the Scriptures, which is indeed the foundation of our faith, they being put for their writings. Out of all which nothing will follow for the pope, or nothing in special manner.

I will trouble you with no other reasons, only I will shew you this challenge is false, because many of them have erred. The first shall be Marcellus, or Marcellinus, who offered up sacrifice to idols, and by the council of Sessa was made to recant it. The second Liberius, whom Jerome and Athanasius affirm to have been an Arian, one that denied the deity of Christ. Thirdly, like to him was Felix, who was an Arian, as the same Jerome writeth. Innocent the First made both baptism and the eucharist necessary to salvation of infants (Augustine, lib. 1, contra Julian. Pelagian, cap. 2). The latter of these errors was condemned by the Council of Trent, Sessio. 5, sub Pio Quarto, canon 4. Fourthly, Leo the First, who died as Arius did, an Arian. Fifthly, Siricius accounted matrimony pollution. Sixthly, Vigilius accursed all who affirmed that there be two natures in Christ. Seventhly, Honorius the First, which taught, as Melchior Canus confesseth, that Christ had not two wills or operations. Eighthly, Pope Stephen the Sixth, he abolished all the acts of Formosus his predecessor,* and commanded all that had received orders from him to be ordered again, and thought that the sacrament depended upon the virtue of the minister. Ninthly, *in concilio Ravennæ habito*, John IX. disannulled all the acts of Stephen, and Sergius the Third all that Formosus had done; and so that which John had done, and approved the acts of Stephen. Some of these must needs err. Tenthly, Gregory the Seventh, whom Cardinal Benno, in his writing of him, who lived at the same time, makes an heretic, a necromancer, a seditious, and a Simonist, and an adulterer, not the worst bishop, but the worst of all men; a right hell-brand. Eleventhly, Celestinus the Third allowed heresy to break the bond of marriage, and that a man might marry again if his wife fell into heresy, and *è contra*. So Alphonsus de Castro. Twelfthly, John XXII. or XXI., who held that the souls separated from the bodies saw not God, nor rejoiced not with him before the day of judgment, and was forced to recant it with sound of trumpet by the university of Paris, for fear of losing his popedom, as John Gerson writeth in his sermon of Easter. Thirteenthly, John XXIII. or XXII. was accused in the Council of Constance for denying eternal life and the resurrection of the body.

* In Concilio Romano.

All which, with many more, prove manifestly against them that the pope can err, and hath erred, and so may still. Bellarmine, I confess, hath a great many of shifts and evasions to clear his holy fathers, but they are so light and foolish, they are not worth the studying on for the most part.

*Use* 2. This teacheth us how dangerous a thing ignorance is even in every Christian; for if it be the cause of error in the ministers, it will be in the people. And if the ministers all, one and other, are subject to error, if they err, and the people be without knowledge, they will go after, taking error for truth; because they are able to distinguish neither the one nor the other. If it were infallible and certain that their guides could not err, nor their ministers be deceived, it were no matter though they were never so ignorant; but when it is most certain that they are subject to it, and their erring will not excuse the people, though the other answer for their abusing and misleading of them, their ignorance is very dangerous, and that implicit faith popery so much commends damnable. And in them and others, who would persuade the people they may be ignorant, and little or no knowledge is required of them, it is suspicious, as if they meant to make a prey of them, and to broach some errors among them; for then, saith Chrysostom, thieves go to stealing when they have first put out the candle; and then do men utter their bad wares when they have dim and false lights.

*Use* 3. To persuade all men to labour for knowledge, and to increase in the knowledge of the word and mysteries of salvation; that they having the rule of truth and falsehood, the word of God, may not be carried away with the error of one or many, be they never so great or learned. Err they may, be they never so learned; for they know but at the best in part, and err oftentimes they do, because they are not wholly sanctified. For as the greatest part of a church is wholly unsanctified, so the best are but in part sanctified, and so are subject to partiality and error; yea, may both err, and defend error against their knowledge, some violent temptation of pride, pleasure, and profit, and such like, carrying them thereunto, seeing none now is incessantly guided and governed by the Spirit. Then had they need of knowledge, that they may try and discern the spirits and doctrines; and he that is not careless which end goes forwards, not reckless for his soul, whether it walk in the paths of

truth or in the paths of error, will not be careless for it, and to grow in knowledge. But if they err, how not we? Lookers on may see more than players. We may allude to that, Prov. xxviii. 11, 'The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding can try him.' And God often to the simple reveals things when hid from wise, Mat. xi. 25, to humble them, and know themselves but men.

It is a thing that cannot be denied, because stories of all times do manifestly prove it, that sometimes errors and heresies have so much prevailed, that the most part of them who held and possessed great places of office and dignity in the church of God, either for fear, flattery, hope of gain, or honour, or else misled through simplicity, or directly falling into error and heresy, have departed from the soundness of the faith, so that the sincerity of religion was upholden, and the truth defended and maintained only by some few, and they molested, persecuted, and traduced as turbulent and seditious persons, enemies to the common peace of the Christian world. To say nothing of the times of Christ, and after him of the first churches in the Acts, this was the state of the Christian world in the time of Athanasius, when, in the council of Seleucia and Ariminium, the Nicene faith was condemned, and all the bishops of the whole world were carried from the soundness of the faith, save Athanasius, and some few confessors banished with him. So that Jerome (contra Luciferam) *Ingemuit totus orbis, et miratus est factum se Arianum;* so Hilarius (contra Aux. Episc. Mill.) complained that the Arian faction had confounded all. Paphnutius, in the Council of Nice for the marriage of ministers, was alone.

*But ye are gone out of the way.* Though they succeeded them in their places, yet not in their faith, not in the truth of doctrine.

*Doct.* There may be an ordinary and external succession of place and person, without succession of faith and truth of doctrine. Manifest here in these priests, who held the places, and did ordinarily succeed the priests who were specially approved of God, yet did not succeed them in faith, and in soundness of truth; and as it was in the times before, often a succession of the one without the other. And this is first manifest by the former doctrine; for when it often happened that all the ordinary priests, such as had the outward succession, were in error, God exciting extraordinary prophets to reprove them, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c, it must needs be that there was a separation of these two. In particular, it is manifest in the time of Elijah, 1 King xix. 14; so when wicked Ahaz was king, 2 King xvi. 11, Urijah the high priest corrupting the worship. In the church of the Jews in Christ's time it was so, for they, condemning Christ and his followers as schismatical, John ix. 22, and xii. 42. This is further proved, Acts xx. 29, 30. These had their succession from the apostles, and held the same seats, the same places which the apostles held, yet had not the same truth and faith. So, out of the ecclesiastical stories, it is manifest that the Arian bishops, as Eusebius Nicomediensis, and Eustathius, and others, did derive their succession of place, persons, seats, and churches, from the apostles; for they were called, chosen, and ordained, after the custom of the church, and had no new, but the lawful calling. So of the Donatists; and Paulus Samosatenus in the church of Antioch succeeded Peter, as well as they did at Rome. And the Greek church, judged by the papists schismatical, hath her personal succession, not only 1200 years, as they confess, from Constantine's time, but long before, from Andreas the apostle, (as Nicephorus lib. viii. Chronol, cap. vi.)

*Reason* 1. Because the grace of God and the truth is not hereditary, that men should leave it at their pleasure to their heirs and successors, as they can their places and seats; for, John iii. as the wind, so the Spirit blows, where it lists. Not living men can make others, whom they gladly would, partakers of their faith and truth; how should the dead and departed? living men more likely.

*Reason* 2. Because as in a commonwealth, new lords, new laws, and succeeding men have different minds, affections, wills, desires, ends, &c., and so change many things; so it is in the church. And though they should leave them it as an inheritance, yet we see children hold not their patrimony, but many spend all; so of this. And as is said of Hymeneus and Alexander, that they made shipwreck of faith, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20; so of others.

*Use* 1. Then falls to the ground the doctrine of popery, making this external and personal succession a note of the church, and by it would prove theirs to be the true church. But if there may be such a succession without true faith, and if true faith only makes a true church, then can it be no true nor certain note; besides, it is not certain nor expressed in the word of God, that the Pope was Peter's successor; no, not in place, but to be proved only by tradition, and not to be deduced out of the word, as Bellarmine (de Rom. Pont. lib. ii. cap. xii.) confesseth. And so the main point whereon the government and hierarchy of the papacy dependeth, hath no word in the Scriptures to prove it; and so the whole is hanged upon the conjectures of men, as upon a rotten thread. For the Scripture not affirming it, what assurance can there be for matter of faith, the matter must needs be suspicious and doubtful. Again, even the histories, which is their proof, are in such various opinions, that a man can hardly tell whom to follow, touching Peter's coming to Rome, and his immediate successors. Some say he came to Rome in the first year of Claudius the Emperor, some in the second, some in the fourth, some in the tenth; and it may be that none of these is true; sure it is, all cannot be true; for his successors, Tertullian maketh Clement his next successor, Optatus nameth Linus, and then Clement; Irenæus

maketh Linus, then Cletus, then Clement. If they differ thus, what certainty? where should faith find any sure ground? If, then, the succession at best is questionable and doubtful, if it may be certain, and yet be disjoined from the succession of faith, as it is most certainly in them, and true faith only makes a church, then can this be no true note of the church.

*Use* 2. To teach us not to be deceived with the glorious show and great boast of such succession, specially when there is an apparent digression from the faith, or a probable doubt of corruption in it. For what succession soever, be it never so long or glorious (as a greater could not be than these priests and people could have objected unto the prophet); yet if it be without truth of doctrine, and true faith, which is the very soul of succession, it is nothing else but a very dead carcase; whereas true faith, without any such outward succession, establisheth and maketh a church: and indeed, one of the purest and most excellentest churches was without such a succession. For the church, of which Christ in his own person was author and master, in which the apostle was brought up and instructed, had no succession; and yet none will, or dare deny, that it was the best and purest church. For whom succeeded Christ and his apostles? Did he succeed Aaron and the Levitical priesthood? Did he elect his apostles out of them? Nothing less. For he succeeded not Aaron, but Melchisedec, being a priest after his order, not the other's; and so the succession was interrupted for many hundred years, and so may be still. And on the contrary, there may be succession and no true church, when the faith is corrupt and not sound, which made the fathers, when they speak of succession, not urge a naked and external succession, but a true succession, and such as was joined with the succession of faith and religion. They are not the children of the saints who hold their seats, but who follow their works.* We must not prove the faith from the persons, but the persons from the faith.† So say we, let them prove the persons from the faith, and not faith from the persons. They have not the inheritance of Peter who have not the faith of Peter.‡ All which shews, they would not have us to stand upon the succession of the place and person, but the faith and doctrine.

*Use* 3. This will prove our church to be a true church, though we have not succession external and personal, which, separated from faith, makes no church; but we have succession of faith, which makes a church; for if these may be separated, if there may be a church where there is no personal succession; as before; if a personal succession and no church, as also before, we holding the true faith of Christ, the true doctrine of salvation, are, notwithstanding the want of personal succession, the church of Christ. If they understand an extraordinary succession, such as hath oftentimes been in the church, we say we have it. Neither hinders that which the adversaries object, that an extraordinary succession ought to be confirmed with miracles, which we have not; for the calling of the prophets was extraordinary, yet had they no miracles to confirm it. Let them shew us what miracles Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Hosea, Amos had, who were called extraordinarily, or John Baptist, John x. 41; besides, what miracles needs there, whenas our pastors either deceased or living, bring in no new doctrine, or new faith, nor erect a new church, but restore the old faith, and repair and purge the church foully corrupted. And whereas they deny us any ordination of ministers, because they which are lawfully ordained must be by an apostle, or one succeeding him immediately, they be all fictions of their own without a word of the Scripture; for they are true pastors, which are called of their flocks and of the lawful magistrate, teaching the people, and doing those things which good pastors should do. And for Bellarmine's distinction of calling or election, which he acknowledgeth was sometime alone of that the people did choose, and grants may be good, but not ordination. It is answered, if election be good, we contend not much about ordination, for they who have authority to chose and call, have to ordain, if an orderly ordination be not to be had. And finally, if all bishops should be Arians, and such as would ordain none but them of their own sect, as sometimes they were, must ordination by them be necessary, or we must have no ministers?

*Use* 4. Then ought men to labour for knowledge, that they be not deceived by the face of men and the church, but that they may know what is the true faith, and who they are that bring it, knowing them to be the pastors of the church by their doctrine, Mat. vii. 15, 16. This fruit is doctrine.

*Ye have caused many to fall by the law.* The second thing reproved in them, in seducing or misleading others, making them to fall into sin.

*Doct.* It is a manifest corruption in the ministers of the church, a thing wherein they are far unlike to their faithful predecessors, and whereby they are made unacceptable unto God, when their preaching or carriage is such, as men by them are kept in sin, caused or occasioned to sin; as this proves it, and Isa. iii. 12, Ezek. xiii. 22.

And this is done, either by not preaching, or very negligently, that they cannot know what to do, and so must needs sin and offend; or by not reproving, by which they do not think their sins to be sins, but remain in them, according to that, Lev. xix. 17; or by daubing, as Ezek. xiii. 10; and promising life unto them notwithstanding their sins, as ver. 22; or by bad example, as Gal. ii. 12, 13.

* Non sanctorum filii sunt, qui tenent loca sanctorum, sed qui exercent opera eorum.—*S. Jerome.*

† Non ex personis fidem, sed ex fide personas probari oportet.—*Tertul.* lib. *de Preser avers. Hæret.*

‡ Non habent hæreditatem Petri, qui fidem Petri non habent.—*Ambr.* lib. i. *de pœnit.* c. vi.

*Reason* 1. Because it is against the main and principal end of his calling, which is to turn men from sin and Satan, to God, and godliness, and righteousness. As then it is a fault for men to go contrary to the main end of their calling or trade: any artificer, as when he should build, to pull down; when he should make, to mar; when he should cure, to wound. And if we may speak familiarly, as we complain of tinkers for making two holes when they undertake to stop one; or of chirurgeons that make two wounds when they profess to cure one made already; so must it needs be a corruption in these.

*Reason* 2. Because he crosseth the desire of God, who delighteth much in the conversion of a sinner, and would have men converted from sin and not kept in them.

*Use* 1. This will convince many ministers of corruption, and degenerating from the prophets and faithful ministers of God, who so walk in their ministry, as men are hardened by them, caused and occasioned to sin; they preach so seldom, and carelessly instruct the people they have charge of; they reprove so little, or smooth so much, or are so corrupt and licentious. And this, not in the Church of Rome only, but in the reformed churches, which have justly separated from her, so that sin abounds everywhere. Now, woe be to such watchmen, for they shall answer for the blood of those perishing souls, and that which perisheth shall be made good, soul for soul. And woe unto such daubers, Ezek. xiii. 13.

*Ue* 2. This may serve for an apology for the ministers of God when they preach, and exhort, and reprove, and threaten, but with small thanks from those that hear them; yet seeing the contrary is corruption, and and a degenerating from the faithful and their steps, and a means to make them unacceptable to God their Lord and Master; it may speak for them if they thus preach and practise. It may be, if they preached all peace, all *placentia*, and waken never a secure man out of his sin, they would con him more thank, and all speak well of him. 'But woe unto you, when all men speak well of you!' saith Christ, Luke vi. 26. This is a sign of a false prophet, a corrupt teacher; but blessed, on the contrary, vers. 22, 23, when they speak but that which he hath commanded, and do but that he hath enjoined them, Isa. lviii. 1. For want of which he reproves and threatens the false prophets, and will condemn all ministers. A physician hath two sons of a prince committed unto him, the one taken with a frenzy, the other sick of a lethargy, upon pain of the prince's displeasure if they miscarry and be not cured by his default, for him to lose life for life. If he should be heard and seen chiding, and beating, and binding the one, and pinching and nipping the other, and using all such means as might cure them, he were not to be blamed.

*Ye have broken the covenant of Levi.* This is the third thing, and the general of the former; the former being a proof of this, that the covenant was broken, when they had failed in these particulars. Of the covenant, and the conditions of it, and so of the keeping and breaking of it, hath been spoken, vers. 4 and 5. One thing may we observe, which will serve for more general use, which is from this, that by two particulars they are made guilty of the breach of the whole covenant.

*Doct.* One or two particular offences makes a man guilty of the whole covenant which he hath made with God. And to speak with James ii. 10, 'He that is guilty of one, is guilty of all;' so much the nature of a covenant will carry; for when it stands on several conditions on both parts, when any condition is broken, the whole must be. In this, the general on man's part is obedience, the special are the particulars of that obedience, which are the several commandments and branches of them. He, then, that is guilty of one branch and hath broken it, is guilty of that commandment, and he that is of that, of the whole, whereof that is a part; and so faulty in one, he is in the whole, guilty of the breach of the whole covenant and the whole law, James ii. 10.

Ver. 9. *Therefore have I made you also to be despised and vile before all the people, because ye kept not my ways, but have been partial in the law.*

*Therefore have I made you to be despised and vile before all the people.* Therefore have I also made you to be despised. This is the repeating of these judgments against these priests for their corruption, and for the dissimilitude and unlikeness which is betwixt these and their predecessors. If we consider the verse in itself, here is a judgment, not threatened, but executed; not imminent, but present; and the deserving cause of it. First, general, 'Not kept his ways;' secondly, particular, being partial in dividing the law.

*Therefore.* That is, because you have thus broken covenant with me, and have declined and turned out of the way of your predecessors from the truth they held, and the faithfulness they practised and performed, I have made you despised. Private and personal sins are often turned by the perverseness of men to the disgrace of the calling; but here the faults and corruption of the calling, neglecting or corrupting those duties, maketh their persons in contempt, which is that here set down.

*I have made.* It is others' malice so to do it, or their corruption, or some other respect; but it is my judgment, I have brought it justly upon you.

*I also made you.* You first broke my covenant, keeping not my conditions, and I also by judgment have now broken it with you, and brought this contempt upon you. And this have I done because you keep not my ways, because you had little care of your carriage and behaviour towards me, and of my ways to glorify me, but neglecting my precepts, have made my honour to be contemned; therefore have I given you up to scorn and contempt, and specially have I laid it upon you for this, 'That you have been partial

in the law,' which is as much as you have accepted persons. He accepts persons, who being judge, is not drawn or led by the laws or by justice, but beholds his person which is brought into question, and is so moved and affected with it, that he favours it against right, either because he is his friend, or because he is mighty, or terrible, or poor, and to be pitied (Jerome). So in the church, the minister he accepts persons.

The judgment upon these prophets for breaking of covenant with God, and dealing unfaithfully in their places, is shame and reproach.

*Doct.* The hatred, envy, and contempt of the people, is a punishment, which in this life the just judgment of God brings upon all ill ministers for the neglect of the duties, and the corrupting of manners. It is here so executed by God. To this purpose is that, Jer. xxiii. 40, 'And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall never be forgotten.' For it hath relation in special to the prophets, and Micah iii. 7, Zech. xiii. 4. Examples in Eli's sons, 1 Sam. ii. 24; the faltering prophets of Ahab, 1 Kings xviii. 40, for that they killed them, came from hatred; and in Amaziah, Amos vii. 17.

*Reason* 1. Because it is a just rule of equal recompense, to do to men as they do to others, much more as they do to him, that, when they make him despised and dishonoured, he should make them; according to that, 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said that thine house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, It shall not be so: for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be despised.'

*Reason* 2. Because it is most equal, that they who have first cast off their authority and dignity, should find it also lessened and changed with others.

*Use* 1. Hence we learn why the clergy of the church of Rome is in that just contempt and hatred that it is everywhere; because they have neglected their duties and their manners. They are not only hated of those who are out of their authority, but even of those who are under their command, who haply fear them, but yet hate. And this is not noted by us, but by Ribera, upon this place, speaking thus:* This place is not so much to be expounded as lamented. What is more holy, more honourable than the priesthood? And yet now who are more despicable? And why so? Because we dishonour our dignity with our lives. How their wisdom, and profession, and practice, is as James iii. 16, sensual, earthly, and devilish, I have not long since shewed; how justly they are then in contempt, need not to be proved. Let me add to that hath been said, the opinion of Bernard of the court of Rome, that you may judge what the confines be. He writeth thus to Eugenius, lib. 4: Amongst these, you being their pastor, walk decked with much precious apparel; if I durst speak it, these are rather pastors for devils than for Christ's sheep. Your court usually receiveth good men, but maketh few good, there the wicked are not made better, but the good far worse.

*Use* 2. This teacheth us, that those ministers take not the right way to honour and credit, and love of the people, who think to have it by soothing and smoothing of them, by playing the bad fellows with them, frequenting the taverns, Isa. lvi. 10–12, revelling and rioting, following cards and dice, neglecting both study and preaching. So this, verily, is the highway to have the hatred and contempt of the people, if this be true, here set down of God. Yet they will not be persuaded of it, because they find those that will speak fair to their faces, and commend them, and haply countenance them for a while, and see not how wicked they are in the eyes of all good men. According to their warrant, Ps. xv. 4, who cannot choose but hate them, when they keep away, and steal away the word of God from them; and as much as lies in them, are cause of perishing of their souls, but perish many more by defrauding them of the word, and by corrupting of them by their bad example, whose ruin they cannot pity, but contemn the authors; yea, all civil men, who favour not religion, hate them, only because they expect they should be more holy than others. And though they cannot conceive all the diligence they ought to have in their places, yet suppose they ought to do far more than they do; and even those who now love them, if God ever call them, will hate them to the full. And if they should be laid in their graves with the love of them, yet when they shall meet in hell, when their eyes shall be open to their cost, they shall be ready to tear one another for hatred and malice, having been the cause of the perishing one of another. As generally in all things, it is usual with God to make that a snare to the wicked, whereby he sought good to himself; so will he make that a shame whereby they sought honour.

*Use* 3. To teach the ministers, if they be in contempt (as who is out of it?), to consider the cause of it; for as they say, it is the cause that makes the martyr, not the suffering; so in this, the cause affords comfort or woe. If it be for the faithful performance of a man's place, by instructiug, persuading, and reproving, there is comfort in it, and he may say, as Job xxxi. 35, 36. But if in examining his heart and ways, it be for the contrary, if he would either remove the present, or prevent that is to come, he must repent and reform; for if he continue, God hath said it, he will make him despised. The world will tell him haply, that the way to favour, and love, and account, is to be corrupt and careless in his place, to do somewhat, and not much. Balak told Balaam so, Num. xxiv. 11, but he speaketh like an heathen king, and they as deceivers.

* Hoc non tam exponendum, quam lugendum est. Quid sanctius aut honorabilius sacerdotio? Quid autem nunc despectius sacerdotibus? cur id, nisi, quia vita, nostra dignitatem nostram dehonestamus?

*Have I also.* You begun and broke covenant with me, and now I have broken with you; not I, but you began first, I only followed.

*Doct.* The Lord never breaks covenant with man unless he first break covenant with him; he never denies them any blessing promised, but when they first deny him the duties promised, and do not perform them; when they have begun, he will follow after. So is it here, and 1 Sam. ii. 30. 2 Chron. xv. 2, 'He went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, O Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin, hear ye me; The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.' Jer. xxii. 13, 16, 17, &c.

*Reason* 1. Because he is immutable, and without change; all the while then they are the same, and do perform duties to him, he will not be otherwise; because then should he change, which is not possible. But they having once changed, they are not the parties to whom he made such promises, and so he neither will nor doth perform them.

*Reason* 2. Because he is most just, yea, justice itself, one that gives *suum cuique.* Now while a man performs his promise, and cleaves to God, he will not withhold, or forsake anything; for promise is debt.

*Use* 1. To teach what is the cause why man often enjoyeth not many of the blessings which are promised. The cause is not in God, not that he hath promised more than he can perform, for he is all sufficient; nor more than he thought fit, for he is most wise in promising as well as performing; nor as men who promise rashly that they cannot spare, and after repent themselves. None of these, nor the like in God, are the cause of it, but it is in man himself; for he hath stripped himself of all interest and right unto the promises of God; because he hath first forsaken him, and dealt unfaithfully with him. Many a man in want of his things he had thought he had had a promise for, and being impatient through his corruption, is like a sick man of a fever, accusing his meat rather than his palate; so he will accuse God rather than himself. But he must accuse himself, seeing God never did, neither can, break with any who have not broken first with him. Many a man finds he wanteth, or is deprived of many graces he had, and good things he possessed, as health, liberty, comforts, and such like; he calleth upon God for them, and thinks to receive, because of the large promises God hath made; and all the while he never thinks that he is not the man to whom the promises are made; or at least, though he did once make a covenant with him, yet he is not the man, because he hath not performed his condition. Like Israel, Isa. lix. 1, 2, 'Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that he cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.'

*Use* 2. To instruct a man how he may enjoy the blessings and promises of God, whether one or other; he must keep promise with him, and perform all the conditions on his part. It is in him to have them or reject them from himself; for if he perform his conditions, God will not fail in his, else he must hear what David heard, 2 Sam. xii. 8.

*Obj.* Then God's faithfulness dependeth on man's.

*Ans.* Not his faithfulness, but his performance; for he may be faithful, and is undoubtedly still, without the performance; as he is a faithful man who never performeth condition with another, when they had broken their conditions of his performing of covenant; as before.

*I made you to be despised.* It was others' malice and corruption, but God's judgment.

*Doct.* As other judgments which befall men, so this of hatred, and contempt, and reproach; it comes from God, though man be the instrument of it; therefore, saith God, 'I have made you vile,' Jer. xxiii. 40, Ps. xliv. 13, 14, and cvii. 40, 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

*Reason.* Because all evil, as in the city, so in every place, comes from the Lord, Amos iii. 6, the evil of punishment. Now such is this.

*Quest.* A question may be made, whether this be a sin or no? If it be, how should God be free from sin, when he hath his hand in that which man doing sinneth?

*Ans.* It is not simply a sin to despise the wicked, for it is a mark of the child of God, Ps. xv. 4, to hate the wicked for his wickedness, so it be done simply and only for that, he set at nought all wicked persons as well as one, and not this and that only, from whom perhaps he hath received some wrong, or whose outward state is contemptible in the world. But if man sin in it, and hate the person rather than his wickedness, and do it in the malice and corruption of his heart; yet is God free from sin, because, as Augustine speaketh of that of Shimei, *Deus non est tam author quam ordinator.* The disposer of his corruption, not the author of it; for they having this venom by nature to hate and contempt, God leaving them, as he justly may, to their own corruption, and they will be hating and despising. Now he doth order and dispose of this at his good pleasure, and makes it fall where he thinks best, where he would punish, and for what end he purposeth, not for what they intended. As Solomon, Prov. xvi. 1, 'The preparations of the heart are in man, but the answer of the tongue, is of the Lord.' Meaning, in the general, that God disposeth of all; so in this, not unfitly.

*Use* 1. This may shew the folly of those who despise and set nought by the despising and reproaches, because they come from inferiors, from base, and mean, and weak men. But these should consider that it is not from them, but God, and by them, and are the sign of his displeasure. It is not to be braved or bragged out. Men may not think to acquit themselves by answering one reproach with another, one contempt with another; for this is but to fight against God, who

hath made them to despise them; who if he cannot make to return with such blasts, and small winds, hath verily, sharp arrows and keen swords, hath mighty armies and great store of men of arms to subdue them.

*Use* 2. To teach men when they are in such judgments, the way how to have them removed; first to have David's thoughts; they curse, because God bids them curse, they reproach and contemn them, because he hath so made them; and then to imagine and consider that he who set them on must snap them and check them. He must only charm these adders that they sting not, or he only must cure their biting; therefore must they by prayer seek unto him for the removing of them, who must take these from them; so David prayed, Ps. cxix. 39, 'Take away my rebuke that I fear; for thy judgments are good.' And if he, a king, of that magnificence and greatness, of that power and authority, could not have them removed but by seeking to God; if he could not cure the biting of a dead dog, as Abishai calleth Shimei, but God must do it; how then shall any other inferior man be able to help himself and remove it without him? Thirdly, he must humble himself and remove his sin which is the cause of it; for if he remove no judgment unless man remove the cause; if he give not favour in the eyes of men, unless they have favour in his own eyes first; if, Prov. xvi. 7, 'When the ways of a man please the Lord, he will make also his enemies at peace with him,' then must they turn unto him, and forsake that which is displeasing, and do that which is acceptable. And if a reproach be, as they say of words, irrevocable, yet will God do him good for the other's evil, 2 Sam. xvi. 12.

*But ye have been partial in the law.* Their particular sin, why he would lay this judgment upon them; their accepting of persons in the work of their ministry.

*Doct.* As it is in a magistrate, and in him that executes judgment, a great corruption to accept persons, so is it in a minister and him that must dispose of God's mysteries. As the magistrate in distributing of justice may not respect poor or rich, friend or foe, high or low, or anything besides justice and equity, so must not the minister in dividing the word. Therefore are they here reproved as offenders for doing so. It is proved by the command to Jeremiah, chap. i. 17, 18. Hence is the commandment indefinite and general to preach to all, and to reprove all, Ezek. iii. 18. It is that Paul teacheth, 2 Tim. ii. 15. And that which he seemeth to reprove in Peter and Barnabas, Gal, ii. 14. The examples of evil and good prophets and ministers shew this.

*Reason* 1. Because, as Jehoshaphat said of judgment, that it was the Lord's and not man's, and therefore persuaded the judges to do it without respect; seeing God himself would do so, therefore ought they, 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. So of this; the word is the Lord's, therefore must he speak it as he would have them.

*Reason* 2. Because they ought to be faithful disposers of God's mysteries. Fidelity consisteth in delivering the whole, and in delivering the parts to them for whom God hath appointed them.

*Use* 1. To reprove all ministers who are partial in the law, and dividing of God's word and mysteries, respecting persons and accepting faces; they are all guilty of very grievous sin before God. Amongst others the whole clergy of Rome are guilty of this sin, having fitted the word and disposition of those mysteries to every man's humour, as not long since was shewed, whenas the word is contrary to every man's humour, as contrary as light is to darkness, yet with them they have fitted it, making it as they speak of it a shipman's hose, a nose of wax, a leaden rule. So Pighius; and Nicolas Cusanus, a cardinal of Rome, writeth to the Bohemians; this understand that the Scriptures are fitted to the time, and diversely to be understood, so that at one time they may be expounded according to the common and customable course, but change that and the sense is changed; so that it is no marvel if the custom of the church at one time interpret the Scriptures after this manner, and another time after that; and according to this they so deal for time and persons, and so prove partial in the whole. One thing amongst other argues the partiality of the high priest of Rome, which, they would persuade us, is part of the law and word of God, that is purgatory, which they dispose in respect of persons: The rich and great ones, able to give much, shall not long be in it; they who can give less, the longer; they who are able to give nothing, perpetually. If he had any charity in him, of which they brag much, he would free all, and freely, seeing they teach it is the pope's *peculium;* but if he had but equity and justice in him, he would free one as well as another, and not accept persons, and be thus partial, but not to trifle with them. The partiality is oftentimes too palpable in the reformed churches and the ministers of them, when, in dividing the word, they look not, as the cherubims to the ark, they to the word to speak as it would teach them, which is not partial, but to those who sit before them and apply it so, making it as some write of manna, that it tasted after every man's palate and stomach; so this. But they are guilty of this sin; and though, as fools and wicked persons, they enjoy honour for a time, yet they shall have dishonour, Prov. iii. 35. It is said of the panther that he is so greedy after the excrements of a man, that if they be out of his reach and natural power, he stretcheth himself so much that he kills himself in the end; so may I apply it to these.

*Use* 2. To persuade the ministers of God not to be partial but upright in the law; to respect, as just judges will do, the cause, equity, and justice, and not the persons, the honour, or commodity that is to be had by them; not to deal for that partially with the law, or in it, but strive to divide the word of truth

aright, and to go with a right foot unto the gospel, even as God himself will do, for they are God's judgments. A minister's resolution should be that of Elihu, Job xxxii. 21, 22, 'I will not now accept the person of man, neither will I give titles to man, for I may not give titles, lest my maker should take me away suddenly.' Remembering that as Saul was put out of the calendar of God's kings for his partiality, and is accounted to have reigned but two years when he did many more, so shall they be out of the number of God's worthies if they be partial, whereas their uprightness and faithfulness will, with the good steward, bring them into the joys of their Master.

*Use* 3. To persuade our hearers to give us leave to divide the word without partiality, and not to be swayed with their greatness and riches, and frowns, and such like, but, as occasion may be, to deal with their sins as others, and to give them their portion of judgment as well as mercy, without the knitting of their brows, the strangeness of their look, the censure at their tables and taverns among such as are companions with them in the like iniquity; but if they will not, we must take leave, we had rather fall into the hands of men than God; we know that is a fearful thing. It is neither your wealth, nor your favour, nor honour, and credit, that either can keep us from being vile and despised, if God say to men, despise them, nor will answer for us when we must give an account of our stewardship.

Ver. 10. *Have we not all one father? hath not one God made us? why do we transgress every one against his brother, and break the covenant of our fathers?*

*Have we not all one father?* The second part of the chapter beginneth and continueth to the end, containing the reproof of divers particular vices in the people of Israel in general, both priest and people. In this tenth verse he reproveth their injurious and unequal dealing in the general.

*Have we not all one father?* Some understand these words with the next verse, as if it were a reason spoken in the defence of their taking of idolatrous wives by them who had done it. Their reason is thus, that, seeing that they had all one father, which was Adam, and all one Creator, which was God, there was no reason why they should not marry with them. But others do understand them as two main reasons against their marrying them, urged by the prophet from God himself; and so the expounding of the words will rather confirm, and the greater consent of the learned, old and new, go that way. Jerome saith that the people being returned out of captivity, the princes, and priests, and people, put away their wives of the Israelites' kindred, which, by reason of their poverty and injury of the long way, and weakness of sex, impatiently bearing the labour, were wasted, and became both infirm and deformed in body, whereupon they matched with strangers who were fresh in years, beautiful, and comely, the daughters of rich and mighty men, as we may see in the 9th of Ezra, that is, with the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, &c. Therefore they think the prophet here reproves them, first, for their marriages, and after for their divorces, ver. 16.

There are two special and chief causes of love and goodwill amongst men. The one is kindred, affinity, or consanguinity; the other is one and the same society of religion. First, nature compels men to affect and love earnestly those who are born in the same family, descended from the same parents and stock, which bond cannot be violated or broken off without great wickedness; secondly, men reasonable and wise do think those specially to be affected by them who are companions with them in the same religion and worship. And though this is the most worthy and sure, yet the other goes before, and first carries sway with men, because it is by nature bred with them and continued from their infancy. And these two they are here pressed withal, as those which condemns their fact, dealing thus to put away the daughters of Israel, the worshippers of the true God, and to take unto them the daughters of the heathen, worshippers of the false gods. For the first of these reasons it is here said, 'Have we not all one father?' that is, are we not all men and women descended from Abraham by one Isaac; from Isaac by one Jacob? Why, then, should we thus do? dismiss those or pass them over, and join ourselves to the kindred of the heathen and strangers? And for the second he saith, 'Hath not one God made us?' Do we not all acknowledge one God the creator, and worship and serve him with duty? Do you dismiss those wives who acknowledge the same creator with you, and worship him, and take unto you those who worship idols for him and put their trust in them? To create, or the creator, is not here taken in that common sense, as when we speak of God's creation of the world, for then could this be no reason against, but rather for them, as some would make a reason in that sort which the prophet laboureth to confute; but this being against them, must not be taken in that sense, but in another sense, as there is a special use of it in the Scripture when it speaketh and dealeth of some new and secret disposition of things, as Jer. xxxi. 22. And so it is used, Isa. lxv. 18. Of such a special creation is it here meant, where love and duty is specially due unto those who are of the same religion with us, who follow the laws and statutes of the same Creator and author.

*Why do we transgress every one against his brother.* It is taken by some to be the reproof of their vice, though closely, or not so openly as ver. 11 it is set down; *i. e.* seeing we are of one kindred, descended from one father, why do we thus transgress one against another, either putting away, or refusing our own kindred in respect of strangers and aliens? *Brother* here

some interpret either the sister or daughter of our brother, or rather according to the use of the Scripture and Hebrew, which by brother understand the female as well as the male; and the application according to the occasion, either both or but the one. Both, as James i. 2, and the one, as here upon this occasion, must needs be the female.

*And break the covenant of our fathers.* Some think that this is applied unto the second reason, because the covenant of the fathers was, that they all, and their whole posterity, should acknowledge and worship one God only, and one people should be consecrated to one and the same God. Others think by covenant is meant the law of God, a thing usual in the Scriptures, and that law which God gave unto our fathers, that they should not take the daughters of a strange God to wife, or of another nation.

Others think the reason stands thus, making a third reason of it, because God, when he made covenant with the Israelites, did it not with those more than with these, with one more than with another, but with all alike, so that they who despise others violate the common covenant, as if it were only a covenant made with them.

The conclusion of all is thus framed: if you be all one in body and soul, and by law, why do you contemn one another?

Generally, in that he used reason, and not the bare authority of God, which had been that he well might, we observe this:

*Doct.* 1. Men who persuade others to good, or dissuade them from evil, must use all those reasons that may any way cause it to take hold, and put an edge to it.

*Have we not all one Father?* But in this verse, as I said, I take not to be reproved any particular sin, but generally their injuring and dealing unequally and unjustly one with another. And this the first reason by which it is reproved, condemning this, because it was against nature, they being all of one parent, all one flesh.

*Doct.* 2. Nature itself, and humanity, though men have no other bonds to link them together, ought to keep men from hurting, and injuring, or transgressing one against another, and to bind them to be helpful and profitable, and do good one to another. So reasoneth the prophet here. And to this I apply that which is Lev. xviii.; when it is given so often a reason to dissuade from injuring, as ver. 7, 'for she is thy mother,' 'for it is thy father's shame;' ver. 10, 'thy shame;' ver. 12, 'she is thy father's kinswoman;' ver. 13, 'mother's kinswoman.' To this may that be used, Acts vii. 26; hereto that, Gen. l. 16, 17, and Isa. lviii. 7.

*Reason* 1. Because unreasonable creatures, as beasts and birds, fishes and fowls, love their own kind, and by nature are taught not to hurt and injure them, but to do them good. Hence is deemed the reason why those beasts that feed on flesh will not eat the flesh of their own kind, taught, as it were, by nature, lest they should eat and devour their own brood, or breeders; how much more, then, unreasonable men?

*Reason* 2. Because it is the rule and voice of nature; *quod tibi non vis, alteri ne feceris.*

*Use* 1. To condemn men not only as irreligious, and void of piety and godliness, but as beastly and unnatural men, and void of humanity, who injure and wrong, transgress against others, and oppress them. I mean not such as may sometimes do it, carried by passion or affection, in ignorance and want of information, but I speak of such as live in it; and, to satisfy their own lust and desires, care not whom they wrong and injure. They will despise, defraud, deceive, and oppress any in buying and selling, in letting or setting, by manifest usury and other oppression. All is fish that comes to net with them. Of such I speak; and how rich soever they may grow or be, whatsoever otherwise, yet are they unnatural men, and void of humanity, and may reprove them as the apostle the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi. 14. So, doth not nature teach that if any man injure others it is a sin unto him? it is against the very light of nature. And though there were no word of God, neither law nor prophets, nothing that might reprove them in the mouth of the minister, which they now spurn against, and could be content there were none, that they might sin without controlment, yet should they not without condemnation; for even that, Rom. ii. 12, will here have place, and shall condemn them by the very light of nature, and now double condemn them, because the light of the word hath shined in a dark place, and they have loved darkness more than light.

*Use* 2. To teach every man that if there were nothing else to bind him to do good to others, or avoid the hurting of others, yet nature ought, and he ought to be thus a law to himself, though he had no written word from God. Whether he be a husband, or parent, or master, or *è contra*, or a private man, nature and humanity ought to keep him from the one and hold him to the other. The heavenly providence hath armed all beasts with natural defences, but man, instead of them, hath the affection of piety, which is called humanity, by which we are defended. This very thing ought then to bind men.*

It is heard from many men, when they reprove others for transgressing and injuring others, It is not for your profession, it doth not become a man of that zeal and profession as you do. If they speak it that they are more bound, it is true, but if to excuse themselves or others, as if it were little or no sin in them, then it is their corruption, and is false; for wherein doth their profession bind them, which nature

* Omnia animalia naturalibus munimentis providentia cœlestis armavit. Homo accepit pro istis miserationis affectum, qui plane vocatur humanitas, qua nosmet invicem tueremur.—*Lactant. de falsa sapientia*, lib. iii. cap. 20.

itself and humanity binds them not to do, or from doing? Undoubtedly in nothing, though it bind more. He is as well bound that is bound in a single bond as he who is tied in a double; both are bound, though not alike. Set then religion aside, which follows in the next place, and even nature itself binds every man to these duties, and from the contrary. And whilst nature lasteth, and is undissolved, the bond is never cancelled. Therefore must every one remember it to do good, and not hurt, even all the days of his life, to those to whom nature hath bound him. Contrary to that, some perform for a while, but as if nature died, they living, do not continue it; as, for instance, betwixt man and wife, many at first do, but continue not; betwixt parents and children.

*Hath not one God made us?* The second reason by which he reproveth their injuring and transgressing against others, because they were all of one church, professed one religion, and served one God.

*Doct.* Religion, when men profess one and the same religion, are servants of one and the same God, it ought to keep men from transgressing against or injuring one another; which as this proves, so that, Gen. l. 17, 'Thus shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive now, I pray thee, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they rewarded thee evil. And now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of thy father's God. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.' Manifest further, because the foundation of religion, which is the word of God, commands love to neighbours, and so under that title other men, Lev. xix. 18, Rom. xiii., Tit. ii. 11, 12, James i. 27, even so far that it comes to enemies, Prov. xxv. 21, Exod. xxv. 4, Mat. v. 43, 44.

*Reason.* Because, as it is nature's voice, so somewhat differing, but all to one purpose, it is Christ's voice, the author of religion, *quod tibi vis, alteri feceris*, Mat. vii. 12.

*Use.* This will serve to condemn men as irreligious and profane, and void of all piety and godliness, and yet profess religion, who make no conscience of hurting their brother, or transgressing against them who worship the same God with them. There are some who make no conscience of transgressing against their brethren by false slanders, railing speeches, and persecuting their brethren, as Ishmael did Isaac, by mockings and reproaches; yea, sometimes more than the servants of a strange god will do; that as an ancient writer said, As Moab and Ammon came from the seed of Abraham, and yet hated the seed and kindred of Abraham. So he of heretics, I, of Christians; they say they profess Christ, and yet none so much as they hate the generation of Christ, his seed. May we not say of them, as Rev. ii. 9, 'They say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.' Again, as 1 Cor. xi. 18, 'When ye come together in the church, I hear that there are dissensions among you, and I believe it to be true in some part.' So I hear that there are some who make the profession of religion but a cloak, the better to transgress against their brethren, and under that colour to deceive or injure them; and I believe it to be true in some part, that some do it that they might better overreach or deceive, and plainly injure others. So did Simeon and Levi, the two sons of Jacob, to be revenged on the Shechemites, but they had Jacob's curse and God's with it. So shall these have; so crossing of God, that that which he would have as a main reason to tie them together, and keep them from transgressing one against another, they make but a mask for their iniquity. Verily, offences must come, but woe to that man by whom they come, it were better he had never been born. And when Christ shall come to judgment, howsoever he may carry it out in the meantime, this will not then serve, Luke xiii. 26 and Mat. vii. 22; for they shall have the answer in both places; and if they be excluded for not helping, Mat. xxv., how shall they be for transgressing against them and hurting them?

Now that the Spirit of God, by the prophet, hath joined these two, and added religion to nature, as that which strengtheneth, yea, makes men perform duties when the other cannot, or is corrupt. From thence I observe this instruction:

*Doct.* The only means to keep men in their duties one to another, is the fear of God and true religion; no bond of nature is strong enough if that be wanting, or if it be corrupted and unsound, as it was in this people; but if sound and true, nothing to that.

*Why do we transgress every one against his brother?* The word signifies to deal disloyally, traitorously, and unfaithfully. And so he accuseth them of perfidious and unfaithful dealing one with another; that they did not keep their promise, word, and covenant, one with another.

*Doct.* Perfidy and unfaithfulness in word and promise, when men promise the doing of somewhat to come, and do not take care to perform it, is a foul vice and gross impiety; so this sheweth. And it is condemned as one of the sins of the heathen, who were given over to a reprobate mind, Rom. i. 30; and made one of the sins of the last and perillous times: 2 Tim. iii. 3, 'They shall be truce breakers.' St Paul maketh his apology that he was not guilty of this, 1 Cor. i. 13. James commandeth the contrary, James v. 12. For this cause was Saul's posterity punished, because he had broken the covenant made with the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. xxi. 6. And Zedekiah, because he had broken his oath and covenant he made with Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. In regard whereof Ezekiel saith, Ezek. xvii. 15, 'But he rebelled against him, and sent his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doth such things? or shall he break the covenant of God, and be delivered?'

*Reason* 1. Because it excludes men from God's kingdom; which appears thus, because that is a note

of him that must enter in, which promiseth, whether simply or with oath, Ps. xv. 4, and performs when he hath done; now, *è contra*, this excludes, and nothing but sin will do that.

*Reason* 2. Because fidelity and faithfulness is not commended for a small matter or virtue, but one of the weightiest things of the law, Mat. xxiii. 23. Then, *è contra*, this must needs be a great vice.

*Reason* 3. Because it is an enemy to all human society and fellowship, which God hath ordained for man's exceeding comfort; faithfulness and truth is the bond of it, and the very sinews of it, when men are faithful in word and promise; this is that which dissolves and disjoints it. For what comfort and society can a man have of him that is off and on, in and out, and nowhere certain? No more comfort than a man can have of his hand or arm, which he cannot stir or put forth, but it is still, and will be out of joint.

*Use* 1. To convince the age as guilty of great iniquity, seeing they are so guilty of perfidy and unfaithfulness; many a husband to the wife, the particular here spoken of, and *è contra*, putting one another away, or taking others with them when they promised the contrary; but of that after. Many forsaking one another in extremity and sickness, when they promised, and that without exception of any sickness, still to cleave to them. In many, as it is infidelity to God, so it is perfidy to their husbands, and so *è contra*. Many masters, unfaithful to their servants, not teaching, not bringing them up as they promised, not providing for them things necessary in health and sickness. Many servants unfaithful to their master, like Judas, like Ziba, more than Gehazi that took but the gain his master refused, they that which is proper to the master. Many men, one with another, deal unfaithfully, promising things they either cannot or never mean to perform, or know cannot be so; many a seller promiseth his ware shall prove thus and thus, when he knows the contrary. Many a buyer to pay at such and such a day, when he never intends it, and knows beforehand he shall not be able. Many promising, only to be free from the importunity of some or trouble of others, only as a matter of compliment, without any conscience of it when it is once passed them; they are guilty of perfidy and unfaithfulness, and besides are drawn to many wicked and rash oaths; for deceiving they are not believed, which makes them add to confirm their credit, heady and rash oaths.

*Use* 2. To persuade every one to avoid this, and to labour to deal faithfully one with another, and to be faithful and true in promises, husband to wife, &c. Seeing it is commended unto us: (1.) From the example of the Lord himself, whose fidelity in keeping of his promise is to be imitated of us if we would be reputed his children. (2.) From the testimony of the Holy Ghost, where it is made one of the notes of God's children, Ps. xv. 4. (3.) The promise of a great blessing, Prov. xxviii. 20. And commanded to us, not amongst matters of small importance, but amongst the weightier points of the law, Mat. xxiii. 23; not when it is in great matters, but in less; for as all disobedience is more displeasing when the thing commanded is small, because the obedience was so easy (August.); so unfaithfulness in the smallest things is the most displeasing to God, when fidelity was so easy; therefore must we be careful to perform in all things that we promise, and therefore be careful how we promise, that it be of things in our own power, or probability like to be in our power. In many things, whether we will promise or no, it is in our power, Acts v. 4; but when it is made we are bound to the performance of it, yea, though it cannot be performed without great loss and hindrance.

*And break the covenant of our fathers.* That is, offend against that law which God gave unto our fathers, it being usual in Scripture to call the law by his name and covenant, Ps. cxix. And this is the royal law according to that, James ii. 8.

*Why do we transgress*, &c., *and break the covenant of*, &c. It is therefore accounted a sin, because it breaks the covenant, the law which God hath given unto his people.

*Doct.* Everything is good or evil, righteousness or sin, lawful to be done or unlawful, not as it is profitable or hurtful, not as it may benefit men, or may by God's providence be turned to his glory, and make for it, but as it is agreeable or repugnant to the law and word of God. Thus he reproveth these because they had gone against the law; this is manifest by that, 1 John iii. 4, 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.' And by that, Rom. vii. 7.

*Reason* 1. Because the law and word of God is the perfect rule of all actions, and so ordained of God. Now in an art whatsoever is according to the rule, is good; but what is different must needs be corrupt; so in this. Again the law is God's will, now everything is, as he willeth or nilleth it, good or evil; for they are not such, and then he willeth or nilleth them, but his willing or nilling them maketh them such.

*Reason* 2. Because whatsoever is just is good, what unjust is evil, but whatsoever is agreeable to the law of justice, is just, and *è contra*.

*Reason* 3. Because whatsoever is agreeable to charity, which is the sum of the law, is good, whatsoever repugnant, evil.

*Use* 1. This will confute a point of popery, whereby they allow things to be done, though contrary to the law, so they be done with a good intent, or with a good zeal for a good end; for so it is in the gloss upon Gratian's decrees, *Malum factum excusatur per bonam intentionem.* And again, *Excusatur malum si sit bono zelo propter bonum.* And upon this ground they allow murdering of princes, massacring of people, treason in subjects, treachery in servants, disobedience in children, that they may dishonour their parents, deny them

and forsake them, so it be *bono zelo propter bonum;* and be lawful to do anything. And this must make it good, contrary to the apparent word of God here, and that Rom. iii. 8, so contrary is the spirit of antichrist to Christ's spirit.

*Use* 2. To convince amongst ourselves men who allow and maintain many sins, because they are profitable to others, and not hurtful to them, and therefore they think they may be done, though they be contrary to the law. One or two instances. Many hold an officious lie lawful because it may stand with charity, when it is profitable for their neighbour. But if against the law and word of God which forbiddeth lies, how should it not be sin and unlawful to be done? Besides, they must understand that charity, which is the sum of the law, hath reference towards God, towards our neighbour, and towards ourselves. And so is this against charity, though helpful to thy neighbour in whose favour it is told. First, because it is repugnant to verity, and therefore to charity; for God, who is truth, hath forbidden all untruth, as that which is opposite to him, and so cannot stand with the charity and obedience we owe to God. Secondly, it is to the hurt of the teller, because, Ps. v. 6, 'The lying mouth destroyeth the soul,' so it cannot stand with love, which a man oweth to himself. Now then, though a man may help his brother and neighbour with the loss of his goods and hinderance that way, but not necessary with the hazard of his life at all times, but never with the hazard of his soul, as every liar shall do. Again, things must first be considered whether lawful or no, whether agreeable to the word, and then, whether profitable or hurtful; that is a second affection of things, and a second consideration. They cannot be lawful but they will be profitable, though not in our carnal apprehension; nor unlawful but unprofitable, though we always see it not. A second instance is for the matter of usury; many allow it if it be moderate, and if it be not joined with the hurt but the profit of the borrower. But whereas usury is simply unlawful and evil, I may answer with some of the learned;* when men make question of moderate usury, whether that be lawful or no, they might as well make question, whether moderate adultery, or moderate lying, or moderate theft be lawful; for as they are things in themselves unlawful, so is this. Again I answer, it is very hurtful, and against charity; for though it be not against the profit of the particular, yet it is against public charity; for usury is many ways noisome to the commonwealth, as is easy to be shewed. Again, it is against charity and allegiance to God, who hath forbidden it, denounced his judgments against it, made gracious promises to them who will do the contrary. Lastly, it is against love we owe to our own souls; for whosoever putteth out to usury, or taketh increase, he shalt not live, but die the death, Ezek. xviii. 13. But for the benefit of the borrower, if it sometimes so fall out by the providence of God, and his pains and hazard, that is no thanks to the lender; for it is without all question, he never intendeth it, though he may sometimes pretend it, and so, though it might make it no sin in itself, yet that makes it sin to him; for gain the borrower or not, he will have security for his principal and gain, and an absolute covenant, and makes no provision for the borrower's indemnity, for he will have it, lose he or gain he, all is one to him. And so it falleth sometimes out against charity, but if not, it is ever against charity in them. Calvin, who is much pretended for the defence of this, and indeed, upon Ezek. xviii., saith that a man may in some cases take usury, and cannot precisely be condemned for it; yet in the same place he saith apertly, We must always hold it to be a thing scarcely possible, that he which taketh usury should not wrong his brother. And therefore it were to be wished that the very name of usury were buried and utterly blotted out of the memory of men; but howsoever it may be profitable, and as they think, so agreeable to charity, yet it is unjust in itself against the law of justice; then the rule holds, Rom iii. 8.

*Use* 3. To teach men when they have done anything, or when they are about to do anything, to examine it whether it be lawful or good, not by the event and fruit which may follow of it, or hath, but by the law of God how agreeable it is to it, and how profitable it is, or may be; nor how it is fallen out of God's glory, but how lawful and warrantable by the word; for a man may profit another and glorify God by that for which he may be condemned; as in Judas and the Jews. If then a man hath done anything, and it is fallen out to the profit of man, and to the glory of God, it is never a whit better for him, unless he find the thing he hath done to be agreeable to the word of God; for if he have done evil and good come of it, it is no thank to him, but to the providence of God who so disposed it. So, if a man be about to do anything, if not agreeable or repugnant to the word, he must not think it good and lawful for to be done, because he sees it may profit man and honour God, as if he had need of his lies and unlawful actions; neither if he be to do that which is agreeable, he must not think he must abstain and not do it; only because he doubts of the consequent of it; but that is lawful, and which he must do by his place, that he ought to do, and leave the other to God; for not the effects make a thing good, but the ground of it; not the fruit makes a tree good, but the roots of it. A man may spoil a good action agreeable to the word by his corrupt end, affection, or defect of faith; but he can never make it good, by them nor anything else, if it be not with that agreeable.

Ver. 11. *Judah hath transgressed, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah*

* Chemnitius.

*hath defiled the holiness of the Lord, which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.*

*Judah hath transgressed.* In the former verse he hath generally reproved them for transgressing one against another; here he sets down one particular, their refusing of their own kindred, and marrying of strangers, whereby they were both injurious to their brethren, and transgressors against God. The sin is that they have married with the daughters of idolaters; the heinousness of which sin is amplified from the persons, as that it is Judah which hath done this evil, whom he had chosen before all the world, and specially reserved to himself in the defection of the ten tribes. They whose name is *Faithful* is become unfaithful, from whom no such thing is expected that they should do so, yet they had transgressed. From the subject. In Israel; among that people whom the Lord hath enriched and endowed with so many blessings and benefits. In Jerusalem; in the place which he chose to place his sanctuary, which was the king's seat, and mother city; whence whatsoever comes, whether piety and honesty, or the contagions of vice and iniquity, may and will easily spread themselves abroad. For the thing, it is called an abomination; that is, such an evil as the Lord abhorreth. Abomination generally is taken for anything that is done against law and right, against some ancient decree, or the custom of laws and manners. As generally, Gen. xlvi. 34. Hence in Scripture is this word abomination used so much when it speaketh of mixing of seed, when caution is had lest anything be done but that which is right and lawful.

It is amplified further, because they have *polluted God's holiness.* By *holiness* is here meant that holiness which was in this people, because they were dedicated to God, and the inheritance of the Lord, and his own proper people, gotten and purchased to himself; which holiness they had violated, in that they had mixed themselves with strange women. Thus Jerome expounds these words, and it is most like to be the meaning; for so is it taken, Ps. cxiv. 2, 'Judah was his sanctuary,' or 'holy place.' That land was dedicated to God, and possessed of God, and by that is made holy; and there he exerciseth his power by directing and governing them as his own people, and those who are dedicated to him.

There are some who understand by it the bond of marriage, ordained and sanctified of God in paradise. But the words following argue the first exposition more like to be the meaning, *which he loved;* that is, which the Lord loved; which is spoken of this people and land.

*And hath married the daughter of a strange god.* In the original it is, 'hath the daughter,' but the meaning is, 'hath married the daughter;' that is, such as profess and worship a strange god. Not that they were gods, or thus acknowledged by him and the word; but it is an usual thing in the Scripture to call things not as they are, or as the Scripture judgeth of them, but after the affection of those of whom he speaks, as 2 Cor. iv. 4, Philip. iii. 19. So these were not true gods, nor no gods indeed, but so accounted of. And this name is communicated to them. Origen (hom. 14 *in Numeros*) hath this rule, that whersoever the name *Jehovah* is, there is meant the true God, the creator of the world; but the other names of God are attributed both to the true God and to false gods.

*Judah hath transgressed, an abomination is committed.* Thus the prophet speaketh, not for the particular only, but the general, that transgressions, even all, are an abomination to the Lord, those things he abhorreth. And so that is the point.

*Doct.* Transgression and sin, all and every one, is an abomination to the Lord, that which his soul so loathes, hates, and abhors. Hence he speaketh so often of sin, and gives it this name of abomination, as in very many places in the books of Moses, as Lev. xviii. 26–28, Deut. xx. 18. Hence he speaketh of particular sins, as Prov. xi. 1, and xii. 22; Rev. ii. Hence he is said to abhor the man that is wicked; not that he doth his person, as he is his creature, which he loves, but as he hath made himself such, Ps. v. 6.

*Reason* 1. Because he is righteous and holy himself. Now the more righteous the judge is, the more he hates iniquity and sin. He is righteousness and holiness itself. Now, as the sun is the greatest enemy to darkness, because it hath light of itself, and is, as it were, light itself, so in this.

*Reason* 2. Because he loves his creature, and sin is that which destroyeth it. Now no man can indeed love any man, but he will hate that which is the cause of the ruin and destruction of him.

*Use* 1. This may let us see, and give wicked men themselves to understand, in what state they stand by reason of their sin; God hates their sin, and abhorreth it, and them for it. How fearful, then, is their condition; * for he cannot hate, but, unreconciled, his face and hand shall be against them for their sins, Rev. ii. 6.

*Obj.* Then is every one in a fearful case; for all sin, even the best.

*Ans.* The first is true, yet follows not the second; because though they sin, and have it, yet they hate it. Now God only hates men for their sin when they love it, not when they hate it; and he will only then judge them when they will not judge themselves, 1 Cor. xi. 31. As in a land and state, when the magistrates will not punish, then God will go the circuit, and hold an assize, and bring his plagues and judgments upon them, but when they do it is an explication of his wrath; so in a particular man, which is a little world, a little country.

* Vera calamitas Deum offendere et eorum quæ ipsi non placent aliquid facere.—*Chrysost.*

*Use* 2. To teach us that it is dangerous to have society with men who embrace their sin, and love it.

*Use* 3. For imitation. If God hate sin, and it is abomination to him, it should be so to his; they should hate it first and principally in themselves and their dearest friends. For if it be not first that he hate the same sin in himself and friends, he hates it not, though he oppose it in others. But if he be God's, he hates the evil in himself which he doth, then hates he it in others, and must do it, for that God commends in the church of Ephesus, and so commands in others, Rev. ii. 6.

*In Israel and in Jerusalem.* The people and place which he enriched with such benefits, and honoured with such privileges, made it the place of his worship and the king's seat; therefore them to do it, it is more heinous.

*Doct.* Their sin is the greater and more heinous who have received the most blessings from God, or the greatest privileges. *Vide* chap. ii. 12, *Doct.* 1.

*For Judah hath defiled the holiness of the Lord.* This is a further amplification of their sin, because it did pollute the people and place dedicated to the Lord, and so made holy to him.

*Doct.* Sin is a filthy and polluted thing, that which polluteth and defileth both places and persons, where and by whom it is committed. So here, and Zech. xiii. 1, sin is called uncleanness. Jerome translated it, as the word will carry it, *menstruata*, menstruous; than which, saith he, *Nihil erat in lege immundiùs, quæ quicquid tangebat, immundum faciebat.* Rev. iii. 18, 'Thy filthy nakedness;' and Micah ii. 10, 'Because it is polluted.'

*Use.* To teach every man to be willing to receive a reproof, and to endure to be told of his offences and corruptions, from this reason, because they are they which pollute and defile him. In a garment, saith Chrysostom (hom. 17 *ad. popul. Antioch*), put on awkwardly or unhandsomely, if a boy tell thee of it thou wilt not much blush, because it is no great shame; the greater shame were to go with it so out of order; and if dirt be upon the garment or face, and one tell thee of it, thou wilt thank him and take it kindly. How ought thou in this? For by this reformation may be had, and thou mayest be made clean and kept clean; for though it is somewhat difficult and hard for a man to part with his sins and overcome them himself, yet if he may have many admonitors, or be often admonished, at length he may be rid of them.

*The holiness of the Lord.* So is the church called, either because of God's presence, which makes it holy, or else because they were dedicated to God, and made his proper and peculiar people; for *sanctified* in Scripture so signifies, to be set apart to a holy use and a sanctified end, as is said of the Sabbath.

*Doct.* The church and children of God must be holy unto the Lord, separated from the world and corruption, and dedicated to him and his service, sanctified and set apart for holy things and holy worship; as the instruments of the temple, the sacrifices, and other holy things, once dedicated to God, might not be taken and applied to profane uses or common uses: no more may men once dedicated to God give themselves to corruption and sin; nay, much less; for those things were but the shadows, men are the substance; those but the types, they the truth. Therefore must they be continued to holy things by his service, as they are dedicated. James i. 27, 'Pure religion and undefiled before God, even the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their adversity, and to keep himself unspotted of the world.' To which we add 1 Pet. ii. 9, Rom. vi. 13.

*Use* 1. This condemneth all late repentance, all deferring of repentance from day to day, till a man be sick or a-dying; because where repentance is not, a turning from sin to God, there can be no holiness at all; for where sin reigns, there holiness can have no place. One heaven can better have two suns, and one kingdom two kings, than one man and one heart these two. While, then, they remain impenitent, and do it *ex professo*, they must needs be impure.

*And hath married the daughter of a strange god.* This is their sin, that they had married with idolaters, with them who were of a false worship, and worshipped a false god.

*Doct.* It is a sin and impiety for Christians and God's people to make marriages with infidels, those who are of a diverse and contrary religion, which are not the servants and professors of the God of their fathers, the true God and true religion. And this is manifest by inhibition first in general: Exod. xxiii. 32, 33, 'Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. Neither shall they dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, surely it shall be thy destruction.' In particular, Deut. vii. 3, 'Neither shall thou make marriage with them, neither give thy daughter unto his son, nor take his daughter unto thy son;' 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'Be not unequally yoked with the infidels; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?' The proposition of the apostle is general, forbidding all society and fellowship with them, much more then this, than which nothing is more strict, and by none men are so firmly knit together as by this. And by the name of *yoking* he seemeth to allude to the type of the law, when God commanded that men should not plough with an ox and an ass together, Deut. xxii. 10; whereunto also belongs the prohibition of the like, Lev. xix. 19, which God spoke not for them, but to teach man.

*Reason* 1. Because it is dangerous, lest by that means, through their continual society and cohabitation, the believer and godly party may be drawn from their piety to impiety, and from the true worship to the false. It fell out with Solomon and Jehoram, 2

Chron. xxxi. 6; yea, with the whole people of God, Num. xxv. 2. Now that which fell out with such great men, and with such multitudes, is danger; it may fall out with others, inferior, fewer, simpler, and weaker. Nay, the Lord saith, without any maybes, that it shall befall unto them: Deut. vii. 4, 'For they will cause thy son to turn away from me, and to serve other gods; then will the wrath of the Lord wax hot against you, and destroy thee suddenly.' And the reason of that is, because being confident in their own strength they tempt God, and so it is just he should give them over to see their own weakness.

*Reason* 2. Because it cannot be but that the service of God, which every believer is bound to perform, even in his private family, must either be omitted altogether, because the man not believing will not suffer it, or interrupted greatly, because the wife will be a-scoffing and mocking, as Michal. And to this may I apply that of Chrysostom: As the woman is an helper, so she often becomes a traitor; and as marriage is an harbour, so it often causes shipwreck.*

*Reason* 3. Because it must needs be prejudicial to the education of their children. When the parents consent not betwixt themselves, how should the children be brought up in piety and the fear of the Lord? Nay, the children will ever follow the worse side, though it happen to be the weaker, because nature is so capable of error and false worship, over that it is of the true. Hence hardly an idolatrous king made mention of in the stories of the Scriptures, but their mothers are named with them, as they who prevailed with them for false worship, more than the fathers did or could for the true.

*Obj.* But against this doctrine there are certain objections, by which some would prove that it is lawful to marry with those who are of a contrary religion. And, first, for the places alleged out of Exodus and Deuteronomy, they say that they are not to be taken generally, as forbidding all matching with such, but particular prohibiting to match with those seven nations of the land of Canaan.

*Ans.* Those inhibitions are general for all of a diverse religion, because it is a certain and true rule, where the reason is general, there the precept is; but the reason of it is general, there being still as much danger as ever was, lest by the unbeliever the faithful may be drawn from the true God and pure worship.

*Obj.* Salmon, one of the princes of Judah, married Rahab the harlot, a Canaanite, Mat. i. 5;† Judah married a Canaanite also, Gen. xxxviii. 2; Moses the daughter of Jethro, Joseph of Potipherah, Solomon the daughter of Pharaoh.

* Sicut mulier adjutrix est, sic sæpè insidiatrix fit: et sicut portus est conjugium, ita et sæpè naufragium parit.—*Chrys. hom. de libel. Repud.*

† It may be there was some mystery in that of Rahab, to shew that Christ would not only save that which was lost, but honour them also.

*Ans.* Solomon is condemned for it by the Scriptures. Judah was a wicked man, no matter what he did. Joseph and Moses went before the law, but yet no doubt they had them to embrace the true religion, and they were converted, as the Scripture speaks manifestly of Rahab; and so it might be lawful. Though there be of the learned who think that they might not marry any of those nations, though converted; because God hath utterly banished those nations from his people, that without some special dispensation they might not marry with the converted, Deut. xxi. 11; therefore lawful to marry such.

Because it is lawful by a special warrant and dispensation; therefore it follows it was simply unlawful, for else there needed no dispensation. Again, all the signs set down in that place shew rather that the Lord did dislike it than approve it, and that he did yield so much, it was because of their incredible wantonness and corruption. First, she must shave her head, that whereas the hair is an enticer, or that which gaineth the unclean affection, he liking her in that, when she was shaven might begin to dislike her; and her nails must be pared to make her more deformed, and her garments must be changed, that whereas some garish apparel was as a snare to an unchaste heart, she being put in modest apparel and plain, he might less affect her. And she must mourn thirty days, that if for her pleasantness and cheerful carriage she deceived and delighted him, now in her mourning and dejected countenance she might less affect him. Finally, if he disliked her, he might neither make her a servant to himself, nor sell her to another, which thing they accounted a burden; by which things God endeavoured rather to cure such an inordinate love and affection than to give liberty to it. Finally, some add that these were used for signs of her repentance and renouncing of her false worship, and if she were converted, then was it lawful.

*Obj.* If such do match together, whether is their marriage lawful, or whether a marriage or no?

*Ans.* Many of the learned do think it is none, but ought to be dissolved. Tertullian hath called it *stuprum*. The ground of all their reason is, because God hath forbidden such marriages to be made, therefore they ought to be dissolved; but this (saving their judgment) is not universally true, but rather that many things, *quæ fieri non debent, facta valent*. For instance in the like: There is a twofold infidel, one who doth openly profess it, and deny some main article of faith, as that there is no such Trinity in the unity. Another, who professeth in words and denieth it in deeds, and is in heart an infidel. It is not lawful to marry with either of these, being known, not the latter. But say a man or woman do marry, and after it appeareth, whether is it a lawful marriage or no? I presume no man will think that, after the knowledge of it, there ought to be a divorce made. But to unfold this as I think more fully, I would demand this

question, whether, if one of the parties fall after the marriage into heresy, whether stands the marriage good, or whether ought there to be a divorce? Papists generally think there should be a divorce *à thoro, non à vinculo*, a divorce unknown to the Scriptures. Celestinus thought *à vinculo*, though Innocentius was much against him. Many of our learned men think it will break a contract, not a marriage, only they hold *liberum divertium*; that is, when all the means and ways are taken to bring them from their error and heresy, and the party infected will not dwell with the other, or not without blaspheming or reproaching of Christ, they may freely, with consent, one depart from the other; but if he will abide in peace with the sound party, he or she is not to put him or her away, which by proportion is gathered from that, 1 Cor. vii. 13–15, which place, though it be understood of those who were found in their heathenish marriages, and visited so of the grace of God; and so, as Tertullian saith, allows not the faithful to make marriage, with the unbelievers, yet it affords some equity and direction when they are once made, and so that they are lawful marriages *de facto*, though not lawfully made *de jure*.

Ver. 12. *The Lord will cut off the man that doth this, both the master and the servant, out of the tabernacle of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.*

*The Lord will cut off the man that doth this.* In this verse the prophet threateneth the judgment of God against them for this sin, even the cutting of them off from the tents of Jacob, whosoever commits any such thing, whether he that teacheth or is instructed, priest or people, whether he stand out obstinately, or hypocritically he would seem to appease his anger by some offering.

*The Lord will cut off.* The Lord will not put up this injury done to him and his daughters; but whatsoever he be that either shall do this hereafter, or hath done it, and repents and reforms it not, every one of them will I cut off and destroy. Jerome observes it here as worth the observation, that he cuts not men off from pardon, or the hope of it; for he saith not, the Lord curseth him that doth this, but he that shall do it, prolonging his curse as it were for the time to come, that he might provoke the offenders to repentance.

*Will cut off.* It is a phrase like that Gen. xvii. 14, Exod. xii. 15, which Tremellius thus interpreteth; that is, both here and in the world to come, he shall be cut off from the company and society of the saints and faithful. The metaphor, as some probably think, is borrowed from physicians, who cut off the body putrefied and rotten members, and have often occasion and necessity so to do. As if the wicked were but rotten and putrefied members in the church.

*The man that shall do this.* A sentence without exception, whosoever he be, it shall be all one to him, who accepts no man's person.

*Both the master and the servant*; and particularly, both master and servant. The interpreter in the Latin hath 'master, disciple, or scholar,' following rather the signification than the original; for that is either 'he that watcheth and answereth,' or 'he that exciteth and answereth.' But for the meaning, some difference there is. Some understand by the watcher or exciter, the teacher, who watcheth that he may teach true things unto his scholars or hearers, and excite their minds; by the answerer, the scholar or hearer, who follows the master, and for further instruction answereth to his demands or questions; and so by this should be signified, that both the people and the priests, who were authors and warranters, or assurers of their course by precept or practice, should perish together. Others take it more generally; and more probably. The meaning is, one and other, and all; not one man of those shall escape, who are defiled with these profane marriages, no, not any one of those families shall be left alive, but be cut off.

*Out of the tabernacles of Jacob.* That is, from God's people, or God's church. Some think it is taken for the cities of Jacob, as they think it to be taken, Ps. lxxxvii. 2. But all is to one purpose; for those cities were part of the church.

*And him that offereth an offering unto the Lord.* Some understand these words particularly of the priest, who, as we may read, Ezra ix. 10, were not free from this. So the Chaldee paraphrast interpreteth it, and Cyril sheweth that though he came nigh to the horns of the altar, yet should he not be there safe with his sins. But some understand it more generally: though they should be very liberal in offerings unto me, and think so to escape my wrath, yet though they should be as liberal as the hypocrites, Micah vi., yet should not that help; for they shall perish with their offerings.

*The Lord will cut off.* Though the magistrate will not look to this evil, being careless or corrupt; though he cannot, because many are wrapt in it, and the multitude too strong for him; or howsoever it be not punished by man, yet the Lord will not let it escape his hand, but he will cut him off.

*Doct.* When men, and they who are in authority, to whom the sword of justice is committed, do not punish the corruptions and sins of their subjects; whether they omit it for fear or favour, by the greatness or the bribery of the offenders, or any such means; then will the Lord take his rod in hand to punish, and gird his sword unto him to cut off every one so sinning and so spared: so here. So when Adam, the prince of the earth and magistrate of his sons, let pass the murder of Abel, because Cain was his first-born and his possession, yet the Lord did lay to his hand and did punish him, Gen. iv. 11, 12, &c. So of the sons of Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 23, 24, and iv. 11, not simply a judg-

ment to fall in battle, but because it was prophesied of them, chap. ii. 34. This is manifest further, out of the story of Achan: while, by ignorance of the fact, Joshua did not punish it, the Lord did it in the whole people; but after the knowledge of it, when Joshua had punished it, the Lord put up his sword, and his wrath ceased, Joshua vii. To these we may add that of Num. xxv. 3, 4, &c.; the cause of the great famine, 2 Sam. xxi., was the king's not punishing of a sin committed by Saul's house; which done, the famine ended.

*Reason* 1. Because, as Jehoshaphat told the judges, their judgments were his, which, if they executed, he will not, because he will not punish one fact twice. But if not they, then will he, because he is just, and else should be unjust as well as they; for if it be injustice in them to spare the wicked, it would be in him.

*Reason* 2. Because impunity from the magistrate makes impenitence in the offenders, and brings them on to hardness of heart and security, so that they never judge themselves; and so, neither judged by authority nor by themselves, they are judged by the Lord, as the contrary proves, 1 Cor. xi. For (I take it) it will hold, not only of those sins a man is guilty *in foro conscientiæ*, but *in foro civili*.

*Use* 1. This sheweth the folly of those men who, as they make conscience of no sin, and only care to avoid those sins the laws of men and state will punish them for; so when they are fallen into any such offences, care only how to escape the punishment of the law and the hands of the magistrate, which, if they can by favour or friendship, by bribes or the countenance of others, or by dissembling or covering of the fault, or howsoever, the care is taken, and they never fear more. Their folly appeareth, because then the Lord will take them into his own hands; and that, saith the apostle, is a fearful thing, and more cause of fear, as Christ speaketh, Mat. x. 28. What will it profit them then to escape the one, and fall into the hands of the other? As much as if a murderer should, by means and money, either get his fact passed over at the sessions, and fall into the hands of the judges at the assizes, or scape their hands, either by corrupting the judge or the sheriff, to pack a jury for his purpose, or the foreman to lead the rest, when the next of kindred is ready to enter an appeal to the king's bench, where there shall be no such packing. All he hath got by it is his reprieving for a while, but to his greater shame and punishment. So with these. Many a man lives in oppressing and injuring others, his tenants and inferiors; and either there is no civil law against him, or if there be, either his greatness or purse will carry it out well enough, that no punishment shall come upon him or take hold of him; and then he sleepeth without fear, when he is as a man that hath escaped the rage of a fool, and is fallen into the power of a bear robbed of her whelps. As masters, if they live in oppression, or usury, or deceit, or drunkenness, or adultery, or some such like, and can escape the magistrate's hands by the means they make, fear nothing. That is their folly, there is more cause of fear God will take them into his hand. Many servants, when they have injured and dealt deceitfully with their masters, stealing from them or serving them with eye-service, misspending their goods, and not furthering, by their endeavours, their profits, if they can escape their master's hands by lying, or shifting, or dissembling, or by his negligence, lenity, or remissness, they never fear; this is their folly, there is now more cause of fear God will take them into his hand, to cut them off by the plague or some other judgment. Finally, let these and all the like see their folly, that think there is no fear if they can escape the hand and sword of man by such means; yet there will be no escaping of the hand of God, who will, as he saith, send serpents that will not be charmed, Jer. viii. 17. Oh consider this, ye that forget God, as if he would not judge the earth when men neglect it, least he tear you in pieces.

*Use* 2. The cause why God sendeth general judgments upon such a city or land as ours is, why he draws forth his sword, or sends famine, pestilence, plague, or such like, it is because the magistrates of that county or town are remiss and careless, suffer sin unpunished and uncensured for some respect or other, making either *munera oris*, or *manus*, or *officii*. For if these did not let them, but they would purge the land from the blood, and the adulteries, whoredoms, thefts, oppressions, blasphemies, and such things wherewith it is defiled, there would never come any such general judgments. For if the justices at the sessions should reform thoroughly, and deliver the gaol every one to his several punishment, the judges should have little cause to ride circuit, or if they did, but to make short ones. So if magistrates, God would not punish; or if he did, yet not so long as three years' famine and three years' pestilence. So that of all the enemies of a commonwealth, none is so great as remiss, careless, and corrupt magistrates; for they are a cause of God's general judgments, whenas their severity would prevent. And none such a forerunner of some general judgment, as they and their remissness; and in a magistrate, it is better for the general good that he be too severe, punishing some he ought and might spare, than remiss, passing by others that deserve it. As a surgeon, better too deep or too nigh, than too little in tenting or cutting.

To teach every inferior not to seek and labour to escape the hand and punishing of the magistrate, or his superior, who is as a magistrate unto him, his master or parent, if he have offended and deserved it, specially remaining by that immunity impenitent in his sin; for besides that it is sin to him so to avoid it, it will be but a further means to bring him to the hands of God, who will punish him more severely and fearfully, cut him off from the tents of Jacob. If any say this falls but out seldom, here and there one, and

so no such fear of it, I answer with Cyprian (*lib. de laps.*) *Plectuntur interim quidam, quo cæteri corrigantur; exempla sunt omnium, tormenta paucorum.* These few should be warning to others lest they also perish. Again, are there but few? Who can remember the many thousands that God hath taken away and cut off by the plague: of inferiors, and servants, and such like, whose superiors had been remiss towards them, and yet say this befalleth but to few? Or, lastly, who can think of many thousands who are lying broiling in hell, and so cut off from the tents of Jacob by the Lord, though man winked at them, who haply, if they had felt the severity of magistracy, might have been saved, and yet say there is but a few? And though many yet have escaped, and do or may escape; though the plague renew upon us, with adulteries, &c., because this is but the poor man's plague or the servant's; yet who sees not that even for the rich and the masters, the Lord hath a plague for them, as Micah ii. 3, and haply will it be for them if, 1 Cor. xi., they judge not themselves.

*That doth this*, or *that shall do this.* God will not presently smite them though they have committed this offence, but he will wait for their return; and if they continue to do it, then will he cut them off. Hence the patience of God to sinners, waiting for their conversion, *vide* Rev. iii. and Isa. xxx.; or rather I observe, that though the Lord a long time spared the wicked, yet he will visit them and pay them home in the end, Isa. xxvi. 14.

*Both the master and the servant.* Both him that wakeneth and exciteth, and him that is wakened and answereth the call; meaning the whole house and family should be cut off.

*Doct.* God's judgments against the wicked rest not in them only, but also are extended to their families, seed, and posterity: Isa. xxvi. 14, 'And destroy all their memory.'

*Out of the tabernacle of Jacob.* That is, take them out of the land of the living, bringeth death upon them and putteth an end to their days, and letteth them be no longer among the living. Though it may reach to their cutting off from heaven, yea, it containeth this: whence,

*Doct.* It is a judgment to the wicked to be cut off either naturally or violently, untimely or in his ripe age, Isa. xxvi. 14, 'and scattered them.'

*And him that offereth an offering*, or *him also that offered.* Though he offer: noting the nature of men, that when they are convinced of their sins they think to please God by outward things, as sacrifices, or fastings, or outward hearing, and multitude of prayers, though they continue in their sins.

*Doct.* It is the nature and practice of carnal and natural men, when the judgments of God are denounced against their sins, and the wrath of God declared against them, to take any course to free and deliver themselves from them, and to appease his wrath, rather than humble themselves and forsake their sins; and sometimes by flying to human helps, sometimes by religiousness, as by offerings, or fastings, afflicting the body, outward hearing and multitude of praying, and such like. It is manifest in these, so in Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 14, 15. And Hezekiah, when he was led by nature and the common course of men, 2 Kings xviii. 14. So in them, Micah vi. 6, 7, and Isa. lviii. 2, 3, &c.

*Reason.* Because it is natural unto them; they have it with other corruptions propagated from their first parents, for thus Adam and Eve dealt with the Lord, Gen. iii.

*Use.* To see the policy of antichrist and the church of Rome. Who knows not from how many things the antichristian church of Rome promiseth to her followers remission of sin, and so freedom from the judgments of God, never once making mention of true repentance, or forsaking of their sin? As the sacrament of penance, alms-deeds, forgiving of injuries and offences, abundance of charity, holy water sprinkled, devout beating of the breast, whipping of themselves, pilgrimages, all sorts of good works. And, as the Rhemist, in Mat. x. 12, episcopal blessing, for Christ's death with them doth not take away daily sins, but original; the sacrifice of the mass doth that; so as the body of our Lord was once offered upon the cross for our original debt, so it is continually offered upon the altar for our daily sins.* And Catharinus (*in libro impresso Romæ*) writeth, that Christ's passion made satisfaction only for original and such sins as went before baptism, but the mass satisfies for sins committed after baptism and our first justification.† Finally, to say nothing of their jubilee, and their lady's psalter, and her pantofle, and an hundred such things.

*And him that offereth an offering.* Though he offer an offering, and think thereby to escape, and appease God's wrath, yet shall he not prevail, nor escape.

*Doct.* In vain do men think to appease the wrath of God, and to escape his judgments, when he is angry and threateneth, by any outward means, as offerings, fastings, prayers, and such performance of parts of his worship, they remaining impenitent in their sins, and keeping them still. So is it here, and manifest in that Micah vi. 6–8, and Isa. lviii. 2–14, Ps. li. 16, 17.

*Reason* 1. Because God is a Spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit and truth. Outward things only cannot please him, being different from his nature; yea, they that only bring them worship him neither in spirit nor truth, but in body and outward things, in hypocrisy and dissembling, &c.

* Sicut corpus Domini semel oblatum est in cruce pro debito originali, sic offertur jugiter pro nostris quotidianis delictis in altari.—*Thomas de sacra Altaris.*

† Christi passionem pro originali tantum peccato satisfecisse, et actualibus baptismum antecedentibus, missam vero satisfacere pro peccatis baptismum et primam justificationem sequentibus.—*Catharinus in libro impresso Romæ.*

*Reason* 2. Because all offerings a man brings to God, all outward service he performs to him, is accepted not for itself; but if it be, it is for him, or else rejected for him, and not he for it; for though men which are corrupt do accept men for their gifts, and disliking their persons, yet feeling * from their purses, they will soon change their minds and like of them: whatsoever they disliked before shall be excused and lessened. It is not so with God; he accepts men not for their gifts, but their gifts for them, or else rejects them and their gifts.

*Reason* 3. Because they shew more contempt against the Lord than if they never sought him with any such means, or came before him, which is manifest thus. A man hath offended his prince, for which he threateneth and menaceth him to execute or destroy him. If he seek not to him at all by any outward means, or come not to him when he is summoned, it is but contumacy, not contempt, for he may do it out of fear. Now contempt and fear cannot stand together in one subject; but if he come and seek him by outward things, never shewing any sorrow for his offence, make no promise of his amendment, but think thus to stay justice, it must needs be judged a gross contempt. And where once contempt appeareth, there no reconcilement at all can be expected. So in this.

*Use* 1. By the former point we saw the policy of popery, by this we may see the impiety of it; by the former they please many, by this they perish as many. And herein appears their gross impiety, that for their own gain they care not how many thousands they lose; not that of purpose they would perish them, but that else they cannot profit themselves; for if they should not teach them that such things forespoken of would please the Lord, and free them from his wrath, they would be of a small account and lower price, and so their gain and wealth decay, because they may say, as Acts xix. 25, 'Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our goods.' Their impiety then is this, that they hold them in the error, that these things will please God, and will not till they perish by such a conceit: like deceitful and unfaithful lawyers, who, to get money and gain to themselves, persuade their clients, term after term, till the day of hearing come, that a plea they have drawn for them will hold good, and then they confess themselves to be in an error, when sentence goes against them, and they deprived of their heritage; like unskilful physicians, who, finding what kind of physic their patient's palate doth best relish, though it be neither of force to preserve or recover him, yet to keep themselves in request and practice, ever prescribe him that, though he die for it in the end. Such physicians are they of no value. If any man think I slander them, because they talk much of penance, and confession, and such things, I answer, I do not. To instance in one. The schoolmen teach that salvation is in the sacrament or sacrifice of the mass, as health is in a medicine, which cures though the party do nothing to help, never believe, only receive it. They teach them that these reconcile without repentance. I deny not that our latter papists, when they find things written, scanned, and so prove scandalous, they have helped things with their late expositions; but it is one thing which they are forced to say by argument, another thing what they commonly teach to the people, who have the one taught to them without the other. They deal like some physicians, who, when they have to deal with common patients, who favour no religion, and think indeed health is in their power, and their medicines, they promise them simply and absolutely health by them. But when they have patients that know religion, or find a minister with them who knows health is not in their power or medicine, then they tell them they must look to God, and reconcile themselves to God, and then by his blessing they shall do them good. So these.

*Use* 2. To let us see the folly of those men who think by those outward things, outward means, to appease and escape, and when they have once performed them, rest as sure as if they had the band in statute-marchant he should not touch them. The church is full of these fools; for, how many are there who, if they hear by the word, or see by the shaking of the rod, that the Lord is angry, think by an offering, giving alms to the poor, by fasting and bowing themselves, by a little more frequenting of prayer, or coming to hear the word, to escape well enough, though they never repent and forsake their sins; or, if God smite them, that they are sick upon their beds and draw near to the burial, if they give somewhat largely to hospitals and holy uses, to schools and churches, though they never truly sorrow before God, nor satisfy the injuries done to men by restitution and such like; yet God will be well pleased with them, and they shall not be cut off, but enjoy the everlasting tabernacles of Jacob? But, fools and blind! why should they imagine that should help them, which will not another, neither ever would? Is not he the same, and is there not still the same means to appease him? That which could not then, can it now? If the body be to be cured, if anything be brought unto them, they inquire who ever used it, and what effect it had with them; and if they hear of many who did use it, and none ever recovered by it, they will never trust to it; and yet for the soul they will go contrary. But if these do not appease him, why are they commanded, or why is that, Heb. xiii. 16, 'To do good, and distribute, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased'? I answer, they are commanded for other purposes, as duties, and testimonies, and signs of thankfulness; for it follows not that there is no use of them, unless this be: God ordained them for other purposes. And as it is in salves, they cure that they were ordained for, saith Chrysostom; for the salve for the eye cannot cure the cut of the hand. And for

* Qu. 'feeing'?—ED.

that, 'Do and live,' that is understood of the whole and of perfect doing, which is impossible for any, because of their weakness, Rom. viii. And that of the Hebrews doth not tell us that that doth appease God when he is angry, but that they please him after he is appeased and reconciled, for then he accepts them graciously and favourably. For so much riseth out of Heb. xiii. 15, 'Let us therefore *by him* offer the sacrifice of praise always to God, that is, the fruit of the lips, confess to his name,' where he makes mention of Christ, shewing that they please him, coming from faith in Christ. But when a man lies in his sin, and so purposeth, and is without faith and without Christ, all the sacrifices of such a wicked man are abomination to the Lord, more when they are offered with a wicked mind, of deserving at his hands, and derogating from Christ, and making him to justify the wicked.

*Use* 3. To teach us, now that the Lord shews himself displeased, and threateneth to cut us off, not to think by any outward things to appease and escape it. It is not offering and alms, not fasting and prayer, that will do it, though they are such things as God calls us unto by such judgments; as Isa. xxii. 12. But in vain shall we trust unto them if we remain in our sins without repentance and forsaking of them. In vain trusts any man to the chirurgeon and his salves to cure his disease, all the while there is in the wound within the flesh iron remaining (*August. de rectit. Catholicæ conversat.*). So shall not his prayers and other things prevail all the while hatred and other sins remain. All the while that Achan and his execrable booty was in the Lord's camp, the tears and prayers of the whole prevailed nothing, Joshua vii.; but he taken out of the way and stoned, they prevailed. To prevail, then, with God, and to have him reconciled, and to escape his displeasure, these cannot do it unless we cast out the execrable thing. If Moses and the rulers will hang up the heads of the people before the sun, and Phinehas execute justice, the plague shall cease; if every one will do so with his sins, he shall not be cut off, or if he die, he shall live. The mariners who were in a storm, Jonah i., took the contrary course to help themselves and save their lives, by unlading their ship and casting all into the sea; but it served not the turn, nor helped them till Jonah was cast into the sea, upon whom the lot fell, who had offended. So in this; many give their goods, &c., and yet it will not serve; cast lots, it will light upon thy sins; and if that will not be cast into the sea, think that there will be no calming of it.

Now, before we leave this verse, it may be some papists will gather hence, as from the like places, that the church standeth not of the elect and predestinate only, as we affirm, for none elected can be cut off from it, specially if we understand the cutting of them off from the everlasting tabernacles. Therefore they now condemn this in us, as the council of Constance condemned John Huss and burnt him. But this, neither any the like place confuteth that we hold, who do not deny that wicked men and reprobates may be of particular churches, but not of the catholic; of particulars, because to be in a particular church is nothing else, but for a man to join himself in that society which professeth true religion. But to be of the catholic church is to be joined to Christ as his member, and to draw life from him, so that he doth not, neither can, perish. In a particular church, then, may wicked and reprobates be, as bad humours and rotten members are in the body, but not in the catholic church, which is Christ's body, which, as his natural body, could not see corruption, neither can it have any such corrupt parts; and as no part of it could be cut off, no more of this, for where the head is, there shall all the members be, whereas then they shall never come where Christ is; they cannot be members of him, and so no parts of the catholic church. But are they not parts of the particular? They are; but yet it follows not that every one in them is part of it; for as every ward or street of London is part of the whole, yet follows it not that every one in them is part of it, for foreigners and strangers may be in it. There is none of the catholic but he either is or hath been in some visible and particular church, yet it follows not that all that are in it are of it. And by this may be answered all those parables and other places they bring out of the Scriptures to prove that wicked men are of the catholic church, for they are all understood of particular churches, where the wicked are mixed inseparably with the good, as chaff is with the wheat in the field and barn, as lees with the wine, in the tierce and hogshead; yet is neither the chaff wheat nor the lees wine, neither they the church.

Ver. 13. *And this have ye done again, and covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with mourning: because the offering is no more regarded, neither received acceptably at your hands.*

*And this have ye done again.* The prophet proceedeth to a second sin in this people, and to reprove it, going from their strange wives to their having of many wives, to multiplicity of them, which is reproved in this verse and 14 and 15. Of the whole, we have two parts: 1, his reproof; 2, his exhortation to the contrary, at the end of ver. 15. In the reproof as the vice is checked, but not so openly as the former, yet necessarily out of the 15th verse it followeth that the grieving of their wives was by taking other wives to them. Now, the amplification of this sin, or the heinousness of it, is set forth two ways: first, because it was injurious to their wives and themselves, ver. 13; secondly, because it was against the institution and ordinance of God, ver. 14, 15. Now, the first against their wives, because they grieved and vexed them, and against themselves, because they made their own offerings to be rejected of the Lord.

*And this have ye done again.* And this sin have you committed in the second place, which comes here to be reproved amongst these particulars; you have taken not only strangers, but you have joined them to your lawful wives, and taken them with them, and made them to mourn and weep.

*And covered the altar of the Lord with tears.* The Israelites' women, or their own proper and lawful wives, finding that they took others to them, and finding them in their places where they ought to have been, and who had only the right unto them, they wept day and night before the altar of the Lord, as it were accusing his providence that he did not relieve and redress their injuries.

*Ye have covered.* He accuseth not those who did weep, but those who were the cause of their weeping.

*Ye have covered.* That is, you have made your wives, by your carriage and dealing towards them, to cover. So Cyril interpreteth these words; and that both because the place must needs have it so interpreted, as also from a common and usual kind of speech. For when we do anything compelled or drawn to it either by some vehement love or hatred, or pity of any man, or by some other affection, he is said to do it, by affection of whom we are compelled or drawn to it. As if a man could not bear the desire he hath to his absent friend or his dead son, we say his son or his friend will not let him rest or be in quiet; for he is often said to do that doth so work, and moveth him either by counsel, or command, or impulsion, though by another. That instance in this case we may give, Zech. xi. 13, 'Cast it into the potter's field.' It is a prophecy of the money which Judas should take for the betraying of Christ, and what he should do with it; and when he was to do it, and did cast it into the temple, Mat. xxvii. 5. It is spoken here as if Christ did it, or should do it; not that he personally did it, but because he moved Judas, and after a sort compelled him to do it.

Now the greatness of these women's sorrows are increased or amplified, that they were so affected that tears came from them; and if it be thought that it is easy for that sex to shed tears, yet this comes not from the composition, but the extreme grief they sustained, when they came to so many, as it were cover the altar of God, even that altar where they sought for ease and comfort. And further to amplify it, it is said with weeping and mourning; that is, their tears were joined with sobs, and sighs, and outcries, by which the sorrow and anguish of their mind was increased, whenas God would have his altar without all spot or injury, most pure, sacred and consecrated to him, insomuch as he forbade the stones of it to be wrought or cut with any instrument of iron; it must needs be ungrateful and unacceptable to him when it was covered and compassed with tears, sighs, and lamentations of those who were in misery, vexed by their husbands and their concubines.

*The altar of the Lord.* This amplifies further their sorrow, that they came to the altar of the Lord to complain, as being without all hope of help from man, and all means, and had only God to fly to and his help; for it is a sign of great oppression whenas men miserable, and affected with injury, come mourning and lamenting to God's altar to complain to him, as those who have no help, no defence in the counsels or help of men, none in the judges and magistrates of the time against such injuries.

*Because the offering is no more regarded.* Or *so that your offering.* It is that which containeth the injury to themselves, for by these tears and lamentations of the wives the anger of the Lord was so stirred up against them, that he saith all their sacrifice and offerings were not accepted or regarded of him; *i.e.* the tears of your oppressed wives are as a veil upon my altar, and do all so cover it, that your sacrifices and oblations cannot be seen, or make me not accept them, when their cries and their prayers come both before me; they do so trouble and corrupt your prayers, and so hinder, that they are not heard of me at all.

*Ye have done again.* In the second place adding this sin to the former, a greater to the less. Some who were single took strange wives, and when others saw that was borne withal, and the magistrates did not control and punish it, they proceed to this, that having wives of the daughters of God, they took to them the daughters of a strange god.

*Doct.* Corruptions suffered in the whole church, and particular members, and not reproved, punished, and corrected, whether they be in doctrine or manners, will soon grow greater, or bring in greater.

*And covered the altar of the Lord with tears.* The first reason condemning this polygamy is drawn from the grief of the wives, and it stands thus: that which is a grief to the wife, and fills her heart with sorrow and anguish, even then when she comes to God's altar, God's service, ought not to be done by the husband, but such as this.

*Doct.* The husband ought not to do that which will grieve and vex his wife, and make her unfit for duties to himself and service to God. It is here the force of the prophet's reason. And this is the commandment of the apostle, 1 Pet. iii. 7, Col. iii. 19. This Laban saw by the light of nature, which made him take an oath of Jacob: Gen. xxxi. 50, 'If thou shall vex my daughters, or shall take wives beside my daughters, there is no man with us; behold, God is witness between thee and me.' This made Rebekah to urge Isaac for the departing of Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 46.

*Reason* 1. Because a man must not do that which may grieve or offend a weak brother, to drive him back, or make him less fit and cheerful in the service of God, and following of him, much less a wife.

*Reason* 2. Because she is the weaker vessel, 1 Pet.

iii. 7. The weakness of the sex craves more indulgence and care. As we more easily pardon children if they offend in anything, by reason of the tenderness of their years, and ignorance of it, so the infirmity of their sex ought to make men they be not rough and severe with them. Some translate it *instrument;* and as Luther speaks of it as a knife with a tender edge, men will not cut stones, brass, or iron with it.

*Reason* 3. Because she is partaker of the same and manifold graces of life (as some books have it), 1 Pet. iii. 7, seeing God hath made her partaker with him of baptism, and of those things that are had by Christ, and made her heir of heaven with him. God having thus equalled her, it should restrain him off from grieving her; for if we respect the inward man, and as every one is in Christ, all are equal, and there is no difference between man and wife, yet because God hath so ordained things, he must be head, and govern, and she must be subject, and be governed. Yet in his government and superiority, because God hath thus honoured her, he must not be grievous to her.

*Use* 1. To reprove all such husbands as make no care at all of grieving and vexing their wives, sometimes when they are present with them, sometimes when they are absent, and by it. And oftentimes such as are ready to cry out of an offence, or an occasion of grief which a man is forced to give to his brother, yet they care not to grieve their own flesh in a nearer conjunction. By their absence they grieve them, seldom at home with them, but taking more delight in riotous and dissolute company, more in taverns and ordinaries, where there are lewd and vain exercises, than in the society of their loving and kind wife, making her sit sighing and sobbing at home, mingling her meat with tears, and her prayers, if she savour religion, with mourning and weeping; or else, which falls out with too many, for want of their husbands' company, they fall into the snares of Satan, and have instruments suggesting to them that their husbands do not love them, by which many a woman that otherwise would be honest falls into folly and uncleanness, which the husband's care and loving company would have prevented, which cometh at the length to the ruin of them and their houses. If they tell me they must go abroad, and have their pleasure and sports, I tell them that their necessary going abroad I restrain not, but their unnecessary. And if they must, why may not the wife say so too? But I will not be comely to excuse her wandering, neither will it be borne with, and there is no reason it should; for they look she should accept their company, and be willing to be with them; and reason good. And why, then, should not they be as willing to dwell with them, and to give them comfort and content, and not to vex them by their unnecessary absence; which because they were so apt to do, by name they are commanded to dwell with them, 1 Pet. iii. 7, but the woman only by implication and consequent. But some bide always at home, but better for their wives they were absent; they are never content with anything they do, but disgrace them before their servants and company, and be bitter unto them in word and deed, and provoke them to unkindness and distemper by strange carriage of theirs; it may be sometimes taking Sarah's maid, as Abraham did, though Sarah never give her him, and so driving them into divers passions and distractions, making them forget both their sex and their duty; and hence comes oftentimes so many complaints of wives when the husband is the cause of it. As if the head should lead the body through fire and water, through mire and dirt, through woods and thickets, where it receives much hurt, and then complain of the hurt and pain that it suffereth; so many, by their strange behaviour, draw themselves into contempt, and make their wives undutiful, and then exclaim against them, when they should condemn themselves. They have gone against the rule of God, and so have brought the curse of God upon them.

*Use* 2. To instruct every man to abstain from vexing and grieving his wife, either by his absence or presence, but to dwell with her, and delight in her company; not withdrawing himself from her, but upon a good calling, and a good cause; and then so as she may perceive he takes no delight, nay, that it is a grief to him to be an occasion of her grief, and that yet he leaves his heart behind with her. When he is present, he must live lovingly and amiably with her, abstaining from all things that may grieve her; so shall he give her an example to do so to him. For they ought not to please themselves, but one another. The good things that are in her he must cherish; for as in children or servants, so in the wife; nothing encourageth her more in any good thing, than that her husband observeth and approveth those good things are in her. The evil things, ordinary infirmities, he must rather entreat God for them, than reprove her: but if either, he must take his fittest time for it; as with physicians, observe her nature, as they their patients, and do it in love, not passion; with a grave yet cheerful countenance, letting her see her fault out of the word, rather than from his will and dislike. And though he be master bee, and have a sting, yet must he seldom or never use it, unless extremity drive him, and that by her peevishness rather than his passion or folly in handling of the matter. And so may he have comfort by her, and fruit of her; for she is therefore compared to a vine, which by the care and diligence of the gardener in careful pruning and underpropping it, and dressing of it, brings forth fruit, even grapes, whence comes wine, which rejoiceth the heart; otherwise it will but wallow on the ground, and remain fruitless.

But to conclude; provided always that she be dutiful and kind, loving and obedient unto him, or else she forfeits her right; and then, if he be bitter and unkind to her, I do not warrant him, but I less blame

him. If she be to him not a turtle dove, but a chattering pie, full of brawlings and contentions, because everything must not be as she would have it, I less blame him if he delight abroad, seeing Solomon hath said, Prov. xxi. 9, 'It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a contentious woman in a wide house.' Prov. xix. 13, 'The contentions of a wife are as a continual dropping.' If she be, as one saith, like a vine that were planted in the flowing sea, which prospereth least when the water is lowest, so his fellowship sweetest when he is furthest off; if as many women, who tell us they make themselves fine and trim to please their husbands, and yet are least trim when they only enjoy them, but only when they are to shew themselves abroad, which in many is rather to please others than their husbands; (I censure not all) so they have no cheerfulness and loving carriage in them when they and their husbands are alone, never so merry as when he is absent, never so solemn and drooping as with him, as if his company were a burden, and his presence a clog unto them; who can to anybody else put on cheerful looks, have lively spirits, and find talk enough, but with their husbands can find none, but sit heavy a whole dinner and supper while, and not a word from her, no token of her joying in his company; and upon every discontent, be strange a day, two or three, looking he should seek to her: I say, by such dealings she hath forfeited her right; and though it be *summum jus*, and so *summa injuria*, to take it, such a forfeiture, or rather it is indeed injustice; yet if he do take it, it is but just upon her; and though he be not fit to do it, yet she hath deserved to suffer it.

*And covered the altar of the Lord with tears.* The general of these words we have heard, the particulars we must examine. These women, though heavy in heart, and full of grief, yet would they not desist from praying to God, and performing their service and offerings to him; neither doth he for that reject them and their offerings, though he be* their husbands' afterwards, who were the cause of their grief.

*Doct.* Though men cannot perform the service and worship of God with that cheerfulness and perfection which he requireth, who loves a cheerful giver, and so a cheerful worshipper; and being perfection itself, would have things in perfection; yet must they perform them as they are able, and he will accept them in their imperfection. Manifest, as here, so by that reproof of Moses to Aaron, Lev. x. 16; the practice of Nehemiah, Neh. i. 4; of David, Ps. xlii. 5, 6; of Zacharias, Luke i. 22; of Christ, who might stand for all, Mat. xxvi. 38, 39.

*Reason.* Because many so have obtained a blessing, and God hath given it them, as Ps. cxxvi. 5, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;' as the gaoler, Acts xvi. 29, came trembling to Paul and Silas, but departed with joy of heart, ver. 34.

* Qu. 'do'?—ED.

*Use* 1. Not let our infirmities hinder us from prayer,

*Use* 2. To come confidently to God.

*And covered the altar of the Lord.* These did not seek to revenge themselves, they resisted not by giving injury for injury, dealing with their husbands as they had dealt with them; but patiently bore it, and committed it to the Lord.

*Doct.* Men who are injured, oppressed, and hardly dealt withal by others, ought to bear it patiently, and not to revenge themselves, and to resist by force and violence.

*Use.* To teach every man to bear patiently the injuries done unto him; if he have received them, do not requite them, but rather with well-doing let him go to God's altar; and with Hezekiah, spread the letter of the king of Ashur before God; with Joseph, carry the hard speeches of his brethren to his father. If he have the same spirit, he must have the same mind which was in the Lord Jesus, and leave vengeance and recompence to him to whom it belongs. Thou art injured, deprived of thy goods, beaten, reproached, and greatly hurt this way; expect the sentence of the judge. If another man's servant shall reproach thee, thou wilt not beat him thyself, but complain to his master; how much more ought thou to do this in respect of God, who hath said, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it?' (Chrysostom, hom. 22, *ad pop. Antioch.*) But thou art desirous to be revenged. That is the way not to revenge; for that is a true, though a strange position and speech, that they are only hurt and injured, who hurt others, and injure them. And the injury which is done to others, hurts none but those who do it; so those who suffer do not repay, or be brought to sin. For example, what was more unhappy than Cain? The death he brought upon Abel hath made him that suffered it to be accounted just in all ages, and him that did it a parricide and murderer. What was more miserable than Herodias, who desired John Baptist's head in a dish, and so plunged her own head in the eternal fire and flames of hell? What worse than the devil, who by his malice made Job more famous, that as his glory increased, so did the other's torments? So now. And if men be not brought to commit sin, and this in particular, what hurt have they by it? It is another truth, that there is no man hurt but of himself;* for admit a man have his goods taken from him, or other injuries done to him, if he fall not into sin by it, keeping the injury boiling in his stomach, or falling to revenge impatiently, or blaspheme, or such like; if he do, then is he hurt, and greatly, not of another, but of himself. Example Job and Paul. These and the like should persuade us to patience, and not to resist. And why should such things be heard? If I let him alone, he will be worse. Hast thou more care of him than of thyself? But are not these words of corruption and pride, who establish things against God?

* Nemo læditur, nisi a seipso.—*Chry.*

Admit he be hurt, yet God ought to be obeyed. Neither ought we to make laws against that which God hath ratified. But it will hurt neither thee nor him; for, Prov. xv. 1, 'A soft answer putteth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.' And if thou wouldst do thyself and him good, the more he is in choler and heat, the more yield thou; for this heat had need of the greater remedy. And the more reproaches there are, there is the more need of patience and gentleness. And when the fever is hottest, there is most need of cooling; so when a man is angriest, of yielding. But this will be a reproach, and there is no manhood in it? Nay, it is no reproach, but compassion and humanity. Finally, in all these things thou shalt find that true of Abigail to David, 1 Sam. xxv. 31, 'Then shall it be no grief unto thee, nor offence of mind unto my Lord, that he hath not shed blood causeless, nor that my Lord hath not revenged himself; and when the Lord shall have dealt well with my Lord, remember thine hand-maid.' And of him touching her, ver. 32, 33, 'Then David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy counsel, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and that mine hand hath not saved me.'

*Because the offering is no more regarded.* Or more plainly, *So that I will no more regard your offerings.* The second reason condemning polygamy; because it makes their worship and service unacceptable to God, while the injuries they did to their wives, and their sighs and tears came before him, and were in his ears, as the blood of Abel, calling rather for vengeance, and a curse, than a blessing. Now, a general from this is this;—

*Doct.* 1. They who come to perform any service to God, and would have it accepted, must be holy and uncorrupt, and not unclean and polluted. *Vide* Mal. i. 6, 7.

Further, a more special thing hence may we observe:

*Doct.* 2. They who grieve, oppress, and injure others, whatsoever he be, and they to him, whether he be husband or magistrate, or master, whether rich, or his landlord, or howsoever, shall find, that their prayers and worship of God shall not be accepted, nor find any place or favour with God. So here, and Isa. i. 15, and lviii. 3, 4, 'Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest it not? we have punished ourselves, and thou regardest it not. Behold, in the day of your fast you will seek your will, and require all your debts. Behold, ye fast to strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; ye shall not fast as ye do today, to make your voice to be heard above.' To this purpose may that be applied, Prov. xxvii. 13, 'He that stoppeth his ear at the crying of the poor, shall also cry and not be heard.' And that may shadow it, Luke xvi. 24. Old Isaac accepted the prayers of Jacob, and his voice the better, because of his rough and hairy hands; but with our Isaac, it is clean contrary.

*Reason* 1. Because they are in their sins, and that which is more, they are not capable of remission of sins, seeing Christ hath said, Mat. vi. 15, 'But if ye do not forgive men their trespasses, no more will your Father forgive you your trespasses.' For if they who remit not other men's injuries against them are uncapable, what are they who do injure others and oppress and wrong them? Nay, if they had had remission, yet the guilt of them would return. *Redeunt dimissa peccata ubi fraterna charitas non est.* As the parable sheweth, Mat. xviii. 34. Now where a man's sins are, there his prayers must needs be unaccepted.

*Reason* 2. Because the cries of those who are oppressed and injured are in his ears, James v. 4, speaks of one kind. And though his ears are not subject to any prejudice, yet when they are justly possessed with injustice and injury, they stop them against the prayers of the oppressor.

*Use.* The judgments of God are upon us, and that justly, because of these grievances, oppressions, and injuries that are amongst us; we pray to have them removed, we prevail not, but it increaseth and spreadeth; is it any marvel? How should our prayers find favour in his ears when the cries of the oppressed and injured have filled them? For these grievances are amongst us; then no marvel if they are come upon us, and that God is come to revenge them, and that neither their prayers, nor the prayers of his ministers, can prevail, James v. 4.

Ver. 14. *Yet ye say, Wherein? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast transgressed: yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

*Yet ye say, Wherein?* The second thing by which the prophet condemneth this sin of polygamy is, that it is against God's ordinance, which is set down in this verse, and that which follows, part of it. The sin is that which is against the ordinance and institution of God, that ought not to be done; such is this. Now it is against his institution, because it is against that covenant, whereof he is both author and witness. The way of setting down this is, by way of question and answer, from the people, and to them from God, depending upon the former. The Lord had told them it made their prayers to be rejected. They ask why it should be so? 'Yet ye say, Wherein?' or wherefore, for what cause, or what reason there was why their offerings should be rejected, and why he would not receive their prayers? As men that would not acknowledge that there was any sin or fault in them, but put him to his proof how he would make it good, and shew them wherein they had offended, not willing to confess unless he can wrest it from them.

*Because the Lord hath been witness.* The Lord's

answer shewing directly that there was cause, because they had been injurious, not only against their wives, but against God, who was witness of the covenant they made betwixt themselves, which covenant, as it was God's, ordained by him, that they should be one flesh, so was it made, he being present, and called upon by him as witness, when he bound himself to take her for his only wife. So that witness between thee and thy wife, is witness of that covenant that is passed betwixt thee and thy wife, and which he ordained.

*Who is the wife of thy youth.* One whom thou hast had from thy youth, who hath been long delightful, comfortable, and amiable unto thee by her beauty, helps, and cheerfulness, and other fruits of her youth and of marriage, when thou, being in thy youth, married her a young virgin. And so it is no new reason, nor yet any strange and obscure name of your duty mutually to be performed, that it may be accounted either a small thing, or is to be denied and lightly regarded, but it is most ancient and of long continuance, even from your youth; neither is there anything committed by her why thou shouldst violate thy faith and break thy covenant with her, for so that *against whom thou hast transgressed* is to be read, with whom thou has dealt unfaithfully, breaking thy covenant.

Those words, *hath been witness*, some understand as if it were meant that he were witness of the injuries and indignities done against them; and that howsoever some would lessen things, yet the Lord took notice of them as great injuries. Yet this meaning, the very tenor of the words will not carry it, for it is not he is witness of you have been unfaithful to them, but between thee and her, with whom thou hast dealt unfaithfully. Others would have it, *he is witness*; that is, he hath contested betwixt thee and her; that is, hath commanded how thou shouldst carry thyself towards thy wife, when he said, Gen. ii. 24, 'Therefore shall man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.' But though some of the learned, as Jerome and Cyril, incline to this, it seemeth to me somewhat violent.

*Yet is she thy companion.* This is added to amplify the crime of unfaithfulness, because she was united to him in nighness of blood, being flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, and in society of life admitted to a partaking of his government and goods, or companion of his bed and government, and that by a covenant made betwixt them, whereunto he had bound himself. *Yet is she*, saith the prophet; that is, for all that she is thus, thou hast dealt thus and so with her. Some: for all thou hast dealt thus with her, yet is she thy companion, &c. and not that other thou hast taken, and put her away or forsaken her company.

*Because the Lord hath been witness between thee.* God's answer, shewing their sin in a more heinous degree, not against their wives and selves, but against him.

*Doct.* They who break covenant and deal unfaithfully with their wives, are not only injurious to their wives, but also sin against God; let the injury be the main one here spoken of, or let it be less, wherein the covenant of marriage is broken. And now that which is of the husband to her, must be understood of the wife's to him; so the prophet here condemns the man's perfidiousness as a sin to God, and as much Solomon insinuates for the woman: Prov. ii. 17, 'Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God,' That a lewd woman dealing unfaithfully with her husband, sinned against God in breaking the covenant whereof he was author. This is further proved because their natural duties are commanded of God, as Eph. v. 22, 25, Col. iii. 18, 19, and other places.

*Reason* 1. Because whatsoever is against the commandment and word of God, is a sin against him, though immediately it hurts man. Nay, indeed, it is only a hurt to man, and the sin against God, seeing he is only the lawgiver, James iv. Now as the tenor of indictments run, you did such a thing against the crown and dignity of the king's majesty; the hurt is to the private person, but the transgression is against the prince; so in this.

*Reason* 2. Because God gave him to her, and her to him, and joined them together; therefore to transgress one against another is to transgress against God; which I gather by proportion from that of Deut. xxii. 15–20, where recompence is to be made to the father for the injury that is done to the daughter; for if there be an injury against him that is but in God's stead, and his vicegerent, what to himself?

*Use* 1. To persuade husbands and wives not to transgress or injure one another, not to deal unfaithfully one with another. For besides that it is uncomely, and most unnatural, to see that a man should hurt his own flesh, and so a woman, that the body should annoy the head, and the head the body, it is against God. Therefore, as Joseph dissuadeth his mistress and restrained himself, Gen. xxxix. 9, so should they one with another, when occasion and opportunity is given, or infirmity is ready to oversway, they should say one to another, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' The duties of the husband, conditioned at the covenant, were to love his wife, to be faithful to her in his body and goods, to dwell with her, to govern her, to instruct her, be an example to her, give her due benevolence of maintenance and employment, and such like; and of the wife, to love and be faithful to him, to fear and obey him. In any one of these to fail, is to transgress against the Lord. And though sometimes in their corruption they could consent to transgress one against the other; as the husband that his wife should be a harlot, and prostrate her for gain to another, or that he might without her reproof be an adulterer, and *è contra*; and so it may seem to be no injury, because

of that, that *volenti non fit injuria;* yet is it a sin against God, and that which may procure the curse of God upon them, to the ruin and destruction of the whole family together with them. It is usual with men that they are careful not to transgress one against another in those things especially which are against the law of the prince; therein they will refrain themselves that they trespass not, though they take some liberty in lesser things. If married folks can transgress in anything which is not against God and his law, let them take liberty to themselves; but in things that are (as what omission of duty or commission of contrary, be it less or more, is not?) let them refrain themselves, and that in the least. For though a friend may be a mediator betwixt them, and reconcile them soon, yet who shall reconcile them to God? It was a weighty speech, spoken gravely, of old Eli to his sons, if they had had grace to have thought of it: 1 Sam. ii. 25, 'If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?' which may be applied to this.

*Use* 2. To teach man and wife, when they have been injurious one unto another, one transgressing against the other, that it is not enough if upon their second thoughts and after wits, upon calm and advised spirits, that they reconcile themselves one to another, and seem sorrowful one to another that they have offended. No; though they recompense it with double love, and kindness, and duty, unless they jointly reconcile themselves to God, for the sin they have committed against him. A thing either unknown or neglected of most, as if there were no sin in it, or but only offence against themselves, as if God never regarded what they did, or as if never their faithful carriage one to another pleased him, nor transgressing displeased him. Hence it is usual that when the wife hath been disobedient to her husband, disdainful and despising them, because they haply have more knowledge or graces than they (which sometimes falls out, though unfitly) and the husband bitter, and rough, and unkind to her, if they drink one to another, or use some other ceremony to make reconcilement, God is never thought of, as if he were not offended, and that they ought not to humble themselves to him. And hence it is, that this day's falling out or injuring is punished with the next, God punishing one sin with another. And whereas the man transgressed against her to-day, she transgressed against him to-morrow; and so they live still in sin and offences; whereas if they had truly humbled themselves to God, they might both have the pardon of that, and obtain the pouring out of the graces upon them, by which they might not afterwards transgress one against another. But for want of this comes the mutual and daily offences betwixt them, and oftentimes God's hand pursues the survivor, as an unkind man hath his recompence by a second wife, which pays him home his sins against his former; and an undutiful woman by a second husband, which made the fathers, Jerome and others, amongst others things, condemn second marriages so greatly as they did. Not considering that (as Chrysostom), *Portus est conjugium, sed sæpè naufragium parit; non juxta suam naturam, sed juxta sententiam eorum, qui illo male utuntur* (De libello repudii). Therefore, to avoid this, they who are in this state ought to humble themselves, and seek to be reconciled to God, as well as mutually with themselves. And for that end, besides the prayers with their families, they ought either jointly or severally in prayer to confess these sins, and humble themselves daily to God, as they happen to be daily or usual offences.

*The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife.* This is, he is witness of that covenant which passed betwixt them, because it was made in God's sight, and presence of the church; there they plight their troth each to other, which was made and confirmed by the invocation of his name.

*Doct.* The Lord he is witness betwixt every man and his wife, of that covenant which passed betwixt them in his presence, and before his church, when they first came together, which as the prophet affirmeth here, so is it confirmed by that, Prov. ii. 17, called 'God's covenant,' not only because he is the first author of it, but because they were both bound to him rather than to themselves, and they are as it were in recognisance in heaven to keep themselves faithful one to another. The case seemeth to stand thus: two parties stand bound to a third, who took of them their several bonds for the performance of conditions mutually.

*Reason* 1. Because it is made by his authority in his presence, his name being called upon, and by his substitute and deputy, to whom the promise of fidelity is first made by them, and received of him in God's stead, before it is mutually made one to another.

*Reason* 2. Because he seeth all things in every place, good or evil, more in the place of his feet, nay, of his presence and face, as the congregation is, specially when he is called to witness.

*Use* 1. To teach men to be wary how they come to the making, and how they do make this covenant: that they do it reverently and religiously, that they be persons fit and free to make it; not to make a covenant, which is presently void by some former contract, and so utterly unlawful, and call God to witness unlawful things. It is enough, and too much, for men to abuse the church and congregation so; for how vile and shameless a thing is that accounted, much more to abuse God himself. As Athanasius in another case, but somewhat like:* If in pagan judicatories we may not call an earthly king to attest, as being greater, both than them that summon and than them that judge, why shall we rashly require the un-

* Si in Paganorum judiciis regem terrestrem testem citare fas non est, utpote majorem et iis qui citant, et iis qui judi-

created God to be witness to creatures, so causing God to be despised of men; so in this. For what is this else, but as much as in them is to bring him into contempt, as he that will witness such unlawful things, or else to provoke him by some extraordinary and fearful judgment to renounce witness-bearing to such deceitful covenant? And though men may imagine if there be some precontracts before, or some other thing which may make this unlawful, that yet they can cover it well enough, either they have agreed not to challenge it one of another, or there was no witnesses. Yet let them know there is now a witness who knows the former well enough, and he that in truth will be their judge, and both witness, and accuser, and judge. And though it be not lawful for earthly judges to do so, yet is it for him. And such shall know that he will not be mocked and abused; do it to the king, or captain, or any man of account, and see whether he will bear it at thy hands.

*Use* 2. To teach those who are in this state, and have made this covenant, to remember who was by when it was made; in whose presence, and who was witness of it, and to whom indeed the covenant was made, as a feoffee in trust for both parties. It was the Lord that was present, and made to him for them; that as parents suffer not jointures to be made to their daughters, which is drowned with the marriage, but to themselves,* or some third person which will look to the performance of it, if his daughter would remit it; so in this with God, who certainly will exact it at the hands of both of them, each to other, and will not fail the trust he hath taken upon him. If it were but for his presence only and because he was by, it should strike a reverence and a care to keep it, as that Mat. xiv. 9: Herod 'for the oath's sake, and them that sat at meat with him,' performed what was promised; so more of this, he for his inferiors, they for their superior and Lord; he for them who only would condemn his rashness, but could not punish his unfaithfulness and promise-breaking; they for him who can do both, and will do both. Men will not break their faith given but in table talk; if they do, it will be a shame to them, though it be but in small things. What a shame is it, then, to falsify that faith that is given in the presence of God and his church? Therefore let every one remember their covenant, and the duties of them, and do them; he is witness, judge, and avenger.

*The wife of thy youth.* She whom thou hast had from thy youth, then taking of her, and hast had the comforts and helps by her ever since.

*Doct.* It is fit and convenient when a man is purposed to marry, and is in some good sort provided for outwards things, having either trade or treasure, either possessions or a profession, that will administer necessities, not to pass his youth before he take himself a wife: Prov. v. 18, 'Let thy fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.'

*The wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast transgressed.* Now that she is old, the heat of thy love is cooled, her beauty being decayed or her portion spent, or such like, now thou hast cast her off and set her by, and taken another, which ought not to be, but thy love should be continual.

*Doct.* The wife must be beloved, not only when she is young and beautiful, not while her friends and favour lasts, &c., but always while she lives: Prov. v. 19, 'Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and delight in her love continually.'

*Yet is she thy companion.* This amplifies their injury and indignity done to the wife, seeing she was, by God's ordinance and his own covenant, admitted into the participation of household matters and government, made his yokefellow and his wife and helper, and by these two rights and titles remained so still.

*Doct.* The wife is her husband's companion, one that by right hath part in his government and household affairs, and who ought to take the care and government with him, put her shoulder under it, and bear it with him. This is from her creation, God making her an helper: Gen. ii. 18, 'Also the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be himself alone, I will make him an helper meet for him:' first, to bear him children; secondly, to keep his body chaste, 1 Cor. vii. 2; thirdly, to tend his person in sickness and in health; fourthly, in governing his house, children, and family. Hence is that Gen. iii. 12, 'To be with me.' Some read, to be my companion and fellow to help me; she that thou gave me to be *adjutrix*, she is *insidiatrix*, yet noting what she should be. Hence it is that the Spirit of God, in the commendations of a virtuous woman, sets down so many properties of a good housewife, and one that takes care of the government and household affairs: Prov. xxxi. 11–27, 'The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and she shall have no need of the spoil. She seeketh wool and flax, and laboureth cheerfully with her hands. And she riseth while it is yet night, and giveth her portion to her household, and the ordinary to her maids. She feareth not the snow for her family: for all her family is clothed with scarlet. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth with the elders of the land. She overseeth the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.' Hence is the practice of Rebekah, Gen. xxvii. 46, and of Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv.

*Reason* 1. Because she is partaker of the honour with him, in being above the rest, commanding and being served by them; then reason she should carry *onus*, and the burden with him, and care with him, if she with command him, seeing she rules and reigns with him, for this government is an aristocracy.

*Reason* 2. Because his cares and troubles are in-

cant; cur Deum increatum ad res creatas invocamus, facientes ut Deus ab hominibus contemnatur.—*Athanasius.*

* Laban took an oath of Jacob for his daughters, Gen. xxxi.

creased by her and hers. Virginity is oftentimes troublesome, for a man to wrestle with his infirmities and passion, and in health and sickness, which, though they be remedied by marriage, yet that brings him into as many, though haply not so pressing, for he that is in his virginity, and finds these and thinks altogether to free himself from them by marriage, is like him that walks in a brake of briars or a thicket of thorns, and some thorns sticking in his garments; if he turn himself about to avoid one, he catcheth and is catched by another.* So here.

*Reason* 3. Because he hath endowed her with all his goods, both *bona animæ, corporis et fortunæ*, that she hath right to them all as himself. And wherefore all this, but to take care with him? Beasts have fodder, servants meat and drink for their labour and care; she the right of all for his endeavours.

*Use.* It reproves the neglect of these duties, and binds all wives in God's fear to perform them.

*Yet is she thy companion and thy wife.* Though the men had taken other women into their beds, and adjoined them to them, and so indeed commit adultery, which breaks the marriage knot, yet because by a lawful judge and magistrate no divorce is made, the prophet tells him she is his wife.

*Doct.* When adultery is committed, and manifestly known to be so, either by the man or woman, yet neither may the nocent nor innocent party put one another away; but they are still man and wife till the cause be lawfully heard of a lawful magistrate, judged, and determined. That riseth hence, that God saith she is his wife. Further, Abraham, with consent of Sarah, took Hagar; who can excuse him of adultery? Yet was Sarah his wife still, else should the seed in whom all the nations of the earth was blessed, and the first, be an adulterous seed, Gen. xvi. So, after her death, of Keturah and his concubines, Gen. xxv. So of David when he married Bathsheba; though it is most probable he had no wife, yet he had concubines; then afterwards, as 2 Sam. xvi. 21 sheweth, yet still was she his wife, and so accounted to his dying day. So of others might be said. Besides, though Christ hath allowed it to the innocent party, that he or she may commence the action, and, being judged, put the other away, yet nowhere hath he commanded it that he should put her away, which, if she had ceased to be a wife, he would, Mat. xix. 9. Again, only he that joined them can separate them, and make them not man and wife, which is God only; that he did by the minister, this by the minister and magistrate, Mat. xix. 6. Jerome reports of Fabiola, that, without the judgment of the church or magistrate, she put away her husband, being a vicious and an adulterous man, and full of all filthy lusts. But though he writ not the rest, yet others report that she was made to do public penance; not that she made a divorce, but that she did it of herself without the judgment of the church.

*Reason* 1. Because, as private and clandestine and secret marriages are not allowable for manifold inconveniences to all, so privy and secret divorces are not allowable, because they will be as prejudicial to the good of many.

*Reason* 2. Because they are man and wife till a just cause be justly known to the contrary, that cannot be in private, but before a competent judge, God allowing none to be accounted adulterers but such as are lawfully convicted of it, which is not betwixt themselves but before a lawful magistrate or judge; for by no right can a man be both a party and the judge.

*Reason* 3. Because if the adultery be not known to the innocent, then they are still man and wife, though there be great presumption of it. And why not if known? It never a whit breaks the bond more known than unknown, unless it be proved, and judged, and determined.

*Reason* 4. Because it is a punishment of a fault committed. None may punish but a lawful judge.

*Use* 1. To reprove those who think it to be in the power of the innocent man or woman to make the divorce after once just cause is known of themselves, without the authority of the lawful judge. As if a man might destroy that which God hath joined! A woman cannot release her jointure in prejudice of herself, nor a man take it from her, if she were willing, to the prejudice of her estate, unless it be done before a lawful judge. How, then, this, that is such a prejudice to her and many others? A recognisance made in the Court of Chancery cannot be released but by the consent of the same court. And when a recognisance is made to God, can man release it without his consent?

*Use* 2. It reproveth those who, as unsoundly as boldly, deliver that, after adultery is committed, specially if it be known, so long as they live together afterwards they live as adulterers. Can man and wife be adulterers? I would think not, by the mere act of knowing one another; nay, sure not. Now the prophet saith they are man and wife still, neither is there any place in the Scripture that bindeth the innocent party to put away the nocent, but gives him liberty if he will; and if he be not bound to it, it is no adultery if he do it not, but still live with her. But adultery hath broken the bond of marriage. I know it well, yet not so but the innocent party may, if he will, repair it and knit it again; specially if she repent, both charity and piety requires; but if not, why he may not if he will, I know not. As in the matter of offence from a man when he repents, he is not only bound to do it, as Luke xvii. 3, 4, but if he do it without repentance, in private injuries, not prejudicial to the common good, I think he is not reproveable; so in this. And though it were horrible for a man to bear such an indignity from his wife, if she shall continue in it, to bring the judgment of God upon

* Chrysost de Virginit., lii., fine.

him and his house; yet if he pass it over once or twice upon hope, he is not an adulterer, though he go in unto her, for they are still man and wife.

*Use* 3. To instruct married parties that, notwithstanding a fault be committed, yet they remain man and wife; and it is in their power to repair the breach, the one by repentance, and the other by pardoning. And better a great deal it should be so than the divorce sued out: to make up the breach privately rather than bring it public. That which the Scripture commends in Joseph, Mat. i., may by proportion instruct men not to traduce their wives so soon as they have offended, but seek to reclaim them privately. Men that have taken a wound in some secret and uncomely part will assay to cure it privately before they go to a physician. They should do so in this. If any man, saith one, have an unsound tooth, how putrefied soever it be, will not forthwith send for a tooth-drawer to have it pulled out, neither, if his hand be ulcerated and wounded, will he forthwith call for a chirurgeon to cut it off; but he will rather use all means possible, and assay everything to cure it and keep it still. Reason: because no man hates his own flesh. Why not, then, the same to his wife, which is his own flesh?

Ver. 15. *And did not he make one? Yet had he abundance of spirit. And wherefore one? Because he sought a godly seed. Therefore keep yourselves in your spirit, and let none trespass against the wife of his youth.*

*And did not he make one?* Thus is it to be read, and not *Hath not one done it?* being referred to God. And so St Jerome upon this place. And Chrysostom, *de libell. repud.* The sum and meaning is, Hath not God made man and woman, and ordained by his perpetual and inviolable decree, that they shall be one flesh, even they two, and no more, that mankind might be increased of them joined together by a perpetual knot of matrimony. And this set down briefly by the prophet, hath our Saviour Christ set down largely, and explained, Mat. xix. 4–6.

*Yet had he abundance of spirit.* This is added for amplification of the former; as if he had said, This did not God at the first, because he wanted spirit to make more women for one man; for he had abundance, to make as many women as he would, or he had remainder of the spirit; as some; taking that the prophet alludeth to Gen. ii. 7, 'The Lord also made the man of the dust of the ground, and breathed in his face breath of life, and the man was a living soul.' And after making woman of his rib, he breathed into her breath of life, as it was the remainder of the spirit; and though he had abundance more, because he had denied, that they two should be one, and not more.

*Because he sought a godly seed.* Here is another amplification of it from one special end of marriage, which is the propagation of the church, and to have a religious and holy posterity, such as might worship the true God, which will not come from the other, but rather increase the synagogue of Satan, and make a profane seed; for taking to them the daughters of a strange god must needs have a corrupt seed, they following the mothers; and if of their own, yet to do a thing so contrary to God's commandment must needs bring a curse and a profaneness upon them, and an adulterous seed prove an idolatrous brood; and it being the fruit of their perfidy and unfaithfulness, can have no blessing from God.

In this verse the prophet condemneth polygamy from God's ordinance, as a thing against it, because he was the author of marriage, which he made but to be of two, and ordained they two should be one, and but they two; and so hence we have a doctrine, which is the description of marriage.

*Doct.* Marriage is a lawful conjunction of one man and one woman, that they two may be one flesh. There are many sorts of conjunctions, but what conjunction this is, that which follows expresseth. But that marriage is a lawful conjunction, and of two thus to be made one, is manifest, as here, so Gen. ii. 24, 'He shall cleave to his wife,' which is meant of a carnal conjunction and copulation, whereby they are, as it were, incarnated one to another. That as Eve was flesh really of the flesh of Adam, so she was given to him by marriage, that she might again be one and the same flesh with him, by a holy conjunction of their bodies. Hence follows it in the same place, 'They shall be one flesh.' And this chapter explains Mat. xix. 5. For having repeated the institution, he adds for conclusion, and for further confirmation, ver. 6, 'Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.' Now when we speak of a conjunction, we understand not that only which is after the consummation of the marriage, carnal copulation, and knowledge one of another, as it is commonly taken; for without that, though it never follow, there may be marriage, and this matrimonial conjunction, as we commonly receive the marriage to have been betwixt Mary and Joseph; but also that voluntary and free covenant which is passed betwixt them, by which the man hath power over the body of the woman; and so, *è contra*, he is become her head, and she subject to him, as the body to the head, as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. vii.

*Reason* 1. Because God would have a holy seed, and the propagation of his church, which, that it might be, he requires a conjunction, and a lawful one, and but of these two. For howsoever it was increased by other conjunctions of one with many, yet that was God's indulgence to them, and his over-ruling providence, which brings light out of darkness, and makes good of evil.

*Reason* 2. Because he, who by the Holy Ghost, in a real union, is united to the Lord, is made one spirit with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Therefore by a real con-

junction of a man with his wife, they are made one with another, one flesh.

*Reason* 3. Because he that committed adultery is become one flesh with a harlot, 1 Cor. vi. 16, and so, as much as in him is, hath cut off himself from his wife, and is no longer one flesh with her. Then by a carnal, corporal, and holy conjunction he is one, and they one flesh.

*Use* 1. This serves for that end the prophet speaketh it, it condemns polygamy; for if marriage be a conjunction of two, how can it be of more?* Adam and Eve were but two, and God said they should be one flesh. And his Son, which came from the bosom of the Father, saith, They two shall be one. The reason that some give, to excuse at least, if not make lawful, the polygamy of the fathers, for the multiplying and increasing of mankind, might here have better taken place, seeing whole mankind was to be derived from them, and the earth to be replenished from them; and seeing to them was the commandment given, Gen. i. 28, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.' If God did not permit it to them, it must needs be apparent that it was not from the beginning, but hath since crept into the world by the corruption of man. But of this afterwards.

*Use* 2. This condemns all divorces, which are not done and made for adultery, but for other vain and slight causes, such as for the hardness of the peoples' hearts, and which, in compassion to the weakness of women, Moses permitted to the Jews; for when God hath said, They shall be one, they make them two, as if his laws were not perpetual. And whenas Christ hath said, 'Those whom God hath joined may no man sever,' they take upon them to sever and dissolve themselves at their pleasure. The decrees of the Medes and Persians were not to be broken; no, not by the kings themselves; much less could any subject do it. But these decrees are far surer. But such men are grossly impudent as take upon them to dissolve, if not to give her a bill of divorce, and so put her away; yet many send them home to their friends, and separate themselves from them, and live very reproachfully.

*Use* 3. This condemneth all adultery, and all adulterers, as they who do divide that which God hath joined, more near than any bond of nature can make; for it is to be preferred before that which is betwixt children and parents, whenas both of them must forsake father and mother, and cleave one to another, yea, their own children, that they may remain one. For seeing God hath made him one with his wife by his own consent, and he joining himself to a harlot, maketh himself one body with her, as the apostle. Now one body cannot be two bodies, therefore an adulterer cannot be one body with an harlot, and at the same time one body with his wife; but joining to her, he doth, what is in him, cut himself off from this, and so they are no longer one, but two. And so as he dealeth injuriously with her, taking from her that is hers; for he is not his own, she having power over his body, as he of hers, 1 Cor. vii. 4; so he dealeth impiously against God, who hath joined them, and said they shall be one. If he offend that puts away his wife for no just cause, what doth he that cuts himself from her by such an impious course? And the more when God gave her him to keep his body in holiness and honour, having no necessity to it. For as he that casts away his ship in the haven is more inexcusable than he that doth it in the main sea, so he that doth cast away himself upon a harlot, being in marriage estate. Chrysostom, making the comparison betwixt theft and adultery, saith,* It is an heinous thing to be a thief, but not so heinous as to be an adulterer. The thief, though his excuse be but a sorry one, yet may pretend he is forced by poverty; but the adulterer having no necessity, only through his own madness rusheth into the gulf of sin.

*Yet had he abundance of spirit.* He could have made more women for one man, for it had been as easy for him to have created more souls, and breathed them into more bodies, as he did but one, and gave her to Adam: insinuating that the spirit or soul of the woman, as of the man, was created immediately of nothing, and not made of the substance of the man, as her body was. And from this I would gather this general.

*Doct.* The souls of men are not propagated with the seed and substance of the body, from the souls of their parents, as their bodies from their seed, but they are created of God, of nothing, and joined to the body. So much this insinuates. And that, Gen. ii. 23, he saith not *soul of my soul*, but *bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*, apparently that he knew it not, if it were that her soul was propagated from his soul, as the body was. If it had been so, and he had known it certainly, it had been more fit to have expressed the conjunction of marriage to have said, This is now flesh of my flesh, and soul of my soul, than as he did. To this we add Eccles. xii. 7, 'Dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God that gave it.' And Isa. xlii. 5, and lvii. 16, 'The souls which I have made;' Zech. xii. 1, 'The Lord formeth the spirit of man within him;' Heb. xii. 9, God is the 'Father of spirits;' where the apostle maketh the opposition, not denying God to be the author of our bodies, as of the souls, but that by the parents, this immediately; else should there be no opposition.

*Reason* 1. Because Adam's soul was not made of the substance of his body, or whereof his body was made, but of nothing, therefore Eve's; for though it

* Zanc. De operibus Dei, p. 65.

* Gravis quidem res fur, sed non tam gravis quam adulter. Ille enim, etsi frigidam, causam habet, tamen ex pauperie necessitatem pretendere potest; hic vero, nulla ipsum cogente necessitate, per dementiam solam in peccati voraginem corruit. —*Chrysost. Hom.* 10, *ad pop. Antioch.*

is not said of her that he breathed into her the breath of life, as of Adam, therefore saith Tertullian and some others, she had both from him. But Augustine (in lib. 10, *sup. Genes.*) saith that this concludeth the contrary; for if God had created her soul after another manner than Adam's, the Scripture would not have been silent in it, no more than it is in the new manner of the creation of her body. Therefore that which was spoken of the man must be understood of the woman; and if of her, then of others, for there is no new manner of creation of man.

*Reason* 2. Because, if it were propagated, it must either receive matter from the body or soul of the parents; not from the body, because they differ in nature, that corporal, this spiritual; not from the soul, for then should it be subject to mutation and change, to augmentation and diminution, and so to corruption; but the soul is immortal, and not subject to corruption, as no spirit is.

*Use* 1. This serves to confute their opinion who think that the soul is propagated, and not created, comes from God by the parents, and not from the power of God immediately. It would be too tedious, and not so profitable, to make answer to all the reasons they bring which are of a contrary opinion; yet not to pass over some common ones which are tossed up and down of the common sort of men who have entered into this question. It is an usual objection with them that which troubled St Augustine (in lib. 10 *sup. Genes.*), that if God do now create souls, how should that be true that in the seventh day he rested from all his works, *i. e.* the works of creation, as it is generally taken; how, then, should he create souls? To answer, I demand whether that Christ his soul was propagated from his mother, or created? If they say it was propagated, they must needs say it was tainted with sin original; if they say it was created, which the learned affirm, St Augustine and others, because it could not be tainted with sin, then have they answered for us that souls are now created; and the meaning of God ceasing from his work is that which the learned give, that after the sixth day he created no new kind of creatures or things, though he do still make particulars of kinds.

Secondly, They say man begets a man, and the mother brings forth a man, of body and soul, like themselves. But admit this, they beget and bring forth only one part, and not the whole, then they beget and bring forth not like themselves.

In answer I demand, Did not God make Eve of Adam? It will not be denied: yet did he make but her body, and created her soul. And if that speech be true, why not this? though but the body only is propagated.

Again I demand, Brought not Mary forth our Saviour Christ a true and perfect man, and like her? It is granted; yet was his soul created of God, and not propagated; confessed of all. Then so in this. And the reason is given; because in the body which is traduced and propagated from the parents, by virtue of the seed, there are qualities and conditions found by which it is made capable of a reasonable soul, and so, because of that, the soul itself is said to be propagated from the parents. And thus the school probably disputeth.

Thirdly, They say, If God create all souls, then his which is begotten by adultery; and so is the author of sin, or else a co-worker or a worker with the adulterers.

I answer first, a difference is to be put betwixt the action and the evil of it. God, who works in the action, is free from the evil; as in the betraying of Christ, and murdering, all move in him, and work by him, but the evil is of themselves.

Secondly, It is answered by some, that there must be put a difference betwixt the action of an adulterer and his will. The action simply and of itself is not evil, but of things indifferent, or naturally good; the will is evil. God works in the action, but approves not his will. St Jerome and St Augustine (Epist. 28, *ad August.*) set it out by this similitude: The earth hath this goodness from God in itself, that what seed soever men cast into it, it keeps it, and nourisheth it, and it brings forth fruit, whether the seed be lawfully taken out of a man's own store and garner, or it be stolen; neither for thy theft or corruption refuseth it to take, to nourish, and to return with fruit. Yet will none for this accuse the goodness of the ground, nor God who hath made it fruitful for this purpose; so God, who is goodness itself, if any go in unto a woman, whether lawfully or unlawfully, doth not cease, according to his decree, and first ordering of things, to work with a man in framing the birth and creating the soul, yet approves he no more his adultery than the other's theft, but condemns, and will punish them both. Lastly, by this reason a man may deny God to have any finger in the framing of the body, as that he should not create the soul.

Fourthly, They say, if souls be thus created, then how should they be infected with original sin? Is it because it is joined with the body? But how should that be, whenas a corporal substance can have no power over a spiritual? and how should God be free from sin, but the author of it, when he joineth a pure soul with a sinful and corrupt body? To this I answer first, for the first part, that in original sin two things are to be considered: first, Adam's disobedience, as the head and root of all others, imputed most justly to them as to his members. The reason is, because as Adam received his justice for them all, so did he his injustice and sin, being not a private man, but the head and fountain of all mankind in respect of both, where they are called not personal justice or injustice, but original. The second is the corruption of the whole nature, and the propension and inclination of it to evil, which is the punishment of that disobedience which from him to his whole posterity is, by the just

judgment of God, derived and propagated. Now when we say that, from the conjunction of soul and body, it is defiled and infected with both these, we mean not as when a piece of gold falls into the dirt or mire, or as wine that is put into a musty cask is corrupted by them, but because the first is imputed to the whole man; this disobedience of Adam, as if it were his own; for as when he is made a member of Christ by the Holy Ghost the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is truly called a just man, so, so soon as he is made a man and the member of Adam, this is. And secondly, because of the guilt of that disobedience, the corruption of nature and the propension and inclination to evil, which they usually have called contagion, is, by the just decree and ordination of God, derived into the soul, he having so decreed from the beginning, that if Adam had stood, and not sinned, his whole justice should have been propagated to his posterity, whence it is called original justice. So he falling, and all his posterity sinning in his loins, the whole corruption of the nature of Adam which followed that disobedience should flow from him as from a fountain into all men; that is, both into the body and soul. Whence it is called natural corruption and original sin. Thus, then, is the soul infected as the body, but yet not from the body by any physical contraction or contagion, but by this course, and hath no need to be propagated, or else it cannot be infected by original sin.

Now that God by this means is not the author of sin or the pollution of the soul, because he hath joined it to the body, is manifest, because he never infused any evil either into the body or soul, for he tempts no man, James i. Again, God hath decreed before all time, and so would perform, to join the soul and body together, as well if Adam stood as if he fell. Now what reason was there that sin coming between, or God foreseeing it, should hinder his decree because of it? This decree being most holy and just, he therefore, in joining these together, hath done that which he most holily, justly, and wisely decreed. And that corruption followed upon this, is not from the conjunction, for then it would have been though Adam had not fallen, but by the default of man, who is in this thing to be blamed, not God. And so neither the propagation of original sin, neither any just imputation that can be laid upon God, can overthrow the creation of the souls, or establish the propagation of them.

*Use* 2. This may teach us the excellency of the soul above the body. The matter and the maker oftentimes commends a thing, and makes it more excellent. So of these. The body is made but of the slime of the earth, or the slime of man, and that by the instrument of man, and is but still dust and ashes; the soul is made immediately of God, and though of nothing, yet is made a matter more excellent than the matter of the heavens,* in nature not inferior to the angels. And this ought to stir up in every man a more special care for the soul than the body; for the health, happiness, and felicity of the one, more than of the other.* Not as many, who bestow more care upon their dogs and horses, and other beasts, than upon their souls, and yet they would not be accounted dogs and beasts; but their bodies they only seek to pamper, and starve their souls, and suffer them to perish: for that they care, and this they neglect. They are like unto those who, having a ruinous house, regard it not, and only seek to themselves goodly orchards; or those who are consumed by a disease, neglect the care of their health, and make them apparel of cloth of gold and silver, and such like; or like a sick woman, who neglects the means of her recovery, and only labours and endeavours to have waiting-maids, jewels, and other ornaments. How foolish are all and every one of these, in every sober man's judgment! Then what wisdom is it for men not to regard the soul, labouring with sin and to prepare themselves with all endeavour stately houses, great lordships, many troops of servants, dainty fare, and fine apparel for the back and belly: as if this, not that, were more excellent; as if the body, not the soul, were of so excellent a nature; as if man had begotten that, not this. But seeing it is contrary, our care should be contrary, as Jacob laid his right hand upon the younger, but his left upon the elder, so our best care and the strength of our thoughts, should be for the soul, younger as much as it is than the body, they should but be left hand thoughts for the body (*vide* Bern., serm. 6, *de advent. Dom.* c. d. c.).

*Use* 3. To instruct parents to take more care for the souls of their children than usually they do, seeing they are thus created, and so in a more special manner God's. The little care they take for it, and the great care for the body, tells us that they believe this is theirs, and not that. And as men care more for their own than for other men's, and many a man bestows more cost and care upon a house of his own erecting than on one of his father's providing, so in this. But the contrary should be, that they should principally care for this; and for that, but in respect of this. God having to dust and ashes joined so excellent and immortal a soul, put in such an earthly tabernacle so excellent a prince; though they ought to have care to keep that in reparation and tenantable, yet their special care should be for this; for the diet, the clothing, the adorning, and the beautifying of it, with good graces and virtues; whereas contrary, the care of parents now is only for the bodies of theirs, how they may clothe them with scarlet, with pleasures, and hang them with rich ornaments of gold upon their apparel, 2 Sam. i. 24, to set them out with lawns and cambrics, and deck them with all the vanities spoken of Isa. iii., as if they would provoke God to plague both body and soul. But is it any marvel, when most parents care only for their own bodies, and not for

* Ambrose.

* Chrysostom.

their souls? How should they care for the souls of their children, seeing charity ever begins at home? To them the prophet speaketh, at least by way of allusion, as it is applied by some of the learned, Haggai i. 2, 4, 'They say it is not yet time to look to God's house and his work;' that when they are old, they are afraid to be young saints, they or theirs; they let God's house lie waste, and his field grow over with weeds, the souls of themselves and their children. If they would consider their ways in their hearts, they should find God plagues us for this sin, as for others, verse 6, 7. If any man should hang thy house, and adorn it with cloth of gold and hanging of arras, and should compel thee to sit naked in ashes, wouldst thou take it well? Thou wouldst not. Now not another, but thou thyself, adornest the house of thy soul with gold and pearls, and suffers thy soul to sit in filthiness and corruption. So of thy children. How shall God take it at thy hands? Knowest thou not that the prince of the city ought to be magnifically decked (Chrysost. *de diversis, hom.* 70). Let every man, then, remit of his care for the one, and increase it for the other. And let it not be true in this, that the king's work and the church's work is most negligently looked to. But as Kish, Saul's father, ceased caring for the asses, and cared for Saul, who must be king, so for the soul; seek to have it nourished, and decked, and adorned.

*And wherefore one? Because he sought a godly seed.* The end of marriage noted, and the reason why still God appoints but one for one, and hath not allowed bigamy or polygamy, but condemns it. Of which then first.

*Doct.* Polygamy is simply wicked, impious, and unlawful; that is, for a man to have two or more wives, or one woman two or more husbands. The learned make two kinds of polygamy: first, when a man hath two wives, but successively, one after the death of the other; touching which now there is no controversy, neither ever was it sin in the court of conscience, how heretically soever Tertullian after his fall disputeth against it, or how hotly soever Jerome opposeth it, under the name of bigamy, against Jovinian and others. Secondly, when one man hath two or many wives, and *è contra*, of which is here spoken and condemned. Further, it is condemned by the Scripture, Gen ii. 24, 'Cleave to his wife,' not wives (Jer.), they one flesh; one cannot be so with many. And if any one except that two is not there expressed, he may find it Mat. xix. 5. Further, verse 9, and if he that puts her away may not do it, what he that keeps her? If adultery in the one, how not in the other? Prov. v. 18, 19. None of which can be, if many wives be taken. 1 Cor vii. 2, 'To avoid fornication, let every man have his wife, and let every woman have her own husband.' His wife, saith the apostle, not wives; and her own or proper husband, not such an one as is common to her and another, Eph. v. 25. Christ had and hath but one church. So Jerome reasoneth against Jovinian, inveighing against Lamech, the first polygamist, who, as he saith, had divided one rib into two.

Reasons against this. Besides that the Spirit of God hath here set down, we add these:

*First*, No man may take that which is another's, and give it to another, without the knowledge and consent of him that is owner of it. Now the man hath not power over his own body, but his wife, 1 Cor. vii. 4. And if it may be supposed she may remit her right, besides that she hath no power to it, for God gave it her but for herself, and not to translate it whither she will. In God himself remains the full right, who will not remit it, if she will.

*Secondly*, They must not defraud one another of their company, fellowship, and due benevolence, 1 Cor. vii. But this they must needs do if they have many. So we may see it, Gen. xxx. 15.

*Thirdly*, Because the love betwixt them ought to be in the highest degree, being one flesh and one bone. In respect of her, he ought to love none else. Now friendship and love in the highest degree, saith St Augustine, by the light of reason, cannot be betwixt many; for the more it is extended to many, there must needs be remission of it towards every one. And in polygamy it is manifest, that for the love of one the rest are contemned, and made as handmaids to her, and she only ruleth.

*Fourthly*, Because heathen men by the light of nature have condemned it, though some of them did practise it, as Laban, Gen. xxxi. 50, 'If thou shalt vex my daughters, or shalt take wives besides my daughters; there is no man with us, behold, God is witness between thee and me.' Also the Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximilian decreed, that none under the power of the Romans should have two wives, seeing that in the edict of the Prætor, such a man is to be accounted infamous. Divers such laws there are; so that Arcadius and Honorius would not permit the Jews their polygamy; only Socrates reporteth in his Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. 31, that Valentinian having Severa, married Justina; and to cover his filthiness, made an act that it might be lawful for a man to have two wives; but that law was rejected and condemned afterwards, and that very shortly.

*Use* 1. This being a truth, serves to confute all of the contrary mind, as some time was that apostate Bernard Ochin, who hath written certain dialogues, and laboured to establish this against the word of God. Infinite it were to trouble you with all, yet some. The greatest is the examples of many of the holy fathers, as recorded in the Scripture, who had many wives, and are nowhere reproved. I answer, first, it follows not, their reproof is not set down, therefore it was not; for seeing the prophet Malachi reproves it, why may it not be supposed others did so? Besides, many things were done that we never find reproved, which argues not the lawfulness of them: the incest of Jacob and Lot, David's judgment against Mephibosheth, and with

Ziba, and such like. Thirdly, if it were not, yet we live by precept, not example. Fourthly, the multitude nor the greatness of offenders will excuse, neither can antiquity prescribe against the word of God. But as for the fathers, it is answered by the learned: first, that God remitted his law to them, which appears, say they, because he neither reproved it by his prophets, neither did he at the publishing of the law, expressly condemn it as he did some others, as incest, Lev. xix., before they think Jacob's marriage of two sisters was unlawful; therefore he remitted his law, yet so as they were not without all sin in it. For sin they consider either as an aberration or turning aside from the perfect rule of God, and so they sinned; or else that which offends God, so that it provokes him to punish; and in this sense they sinned not, God thus remitting the law. Others excuse the fathers because they did it, and God so permitted, for the increase of the church, and not for any filthy and unclean lust to satisfy it; which was true in some, though it hold not in others, as Solomon and some others, who cannot be excused of incontinency. Some excuse, from some probable ignorance, that either they knew not the law, or they thought not of it, and so, though not no sin, yet a less sin. Some, the succeeding ages by their predecessors, that though their examples make not sin to be no sin, yet to be smaller sins, to offend by their example, who were otherwise good and holy men, than when anything is done with a wavering conscience, and men are boldly the first that do it, for they are to be judged to sin by error of judgment, than perversity of affection. Finally, it is probable, that God did wink at that in this people and their progenitors, for the propagation of his people, and to give passage to the fulfilling of his promise of the increasing of them; and though God used that fact of the fathers well, yet will it not follow that they sinned not, when they turned aside from the word of God; but if they sinned in it, and so persevered, and died impenitent, what shall we think became of them? It is probable they never repented, either because they thought they sinned not, or else because they well discerned not their sin; and yet might be pardoned it, and were. It is true, to have God's mercy for pardon requires repentance, yet is it not necessary that every man should expressly repent himself of every particular sin. How many things are done, which are not rightly done; yet not done wickedly by us, but in a conscience not well informed, and so knew it not to be sin? And how many which are forgotten that they were done? And yet by a man's general humiliation for all his sins, and craving pardon of unknown sins, Ps. xix., pardon is obtained. And those fathers often in their lives confessing themselves miserable sinners, and humbling themselves, no doubt that repentance and faith in Christ to come did save them.

But, 2 Sam. xii. 8, David had his master's wives. It is answered by some that he did, because God remitted his law to him. But others, it is never read that he took any one of them to wife, neither is it said so, but though the phrase, *into thy bosom*, is commonly understood of marriages, yet it signifies there only power and authority; that is, I have given thee all thy master's good, and have not excepted his wives, that thou mayest have them under thy power as other things, Tremellius thus, *i. e. res et personas etiam intimas et charissimas, eorum qui prius tui erant domini, subjeci tibi.*

But, Deut. xxv. 5, the brother was to take the wife of his elder brother deceased. It is answered by most, that it was an extraordinary example, and a special thing, but no general rule; for else incest might be proved by it, if it were general. Others answer, that it must be taken and understood if he have not a wife before. And so much they think those words carry, 'if brethren dwell together.' And a reason of it is, because it is not like that God would have a man to neglect his own seed, and his own wife, to raise up seed to others, but only he would have his brother substituted in his place.

I omit many more of no great weight, though of some show, against all which the truth will stand and prevail.

*Use* 2. To persuade the men of our age against it; for howsoever the forefathers escaped with it, God, either for the increase of the church, or by reason of their ignorance and rudeness, winked at it, as yet in another case, Acts xvii. 30, 'The time of this ignorance God regarded not, but now he admonisheth all men everywhere to repent.' So may we say in this, specially seeing Christ by himself, and by others, his apostles, hath declared us the law of the creation, and brought it to the first institution, he being, as Rev. i., 'Alpha and Omega;' and as Jerome applies it to this, when he found all things at his coming brought to *Omega*, to an extremity and height, he reduced them to *Alpha*, to that which was in the beginning. And if it were then granted to be no sin, yet will it be now. They who excuse the fathers, make as of man, so of the world, four ages; the childhood of it, the youth, the man's estate, and the old age. Now many things are fitting for children, and may be tolerated in them, which may not be in men of riper years; as St Augustine saith, In old time for men to go with garments having long sleeves and skirts, it was an argument of softness and wantonness; but now, if they should wear them with either, they should be noted. They say again, that that was the time of darkness, ours of the light; for though they were light in respect of the Gentiles, they are darkness in comparison of us. Now many things are tolerable in darkness, which may not be borne withal in the light. Then in this, as in many other things, we must not study what was done or borne withal, but what is lawful for us to do; and walk not in this, and many other things, as others have done, but as God hath spoken.

Now we may add to the former words, and collect out of them, that when it is said, *Did not he make one?* who is the author of marriage;—

*Doct.* The first instituter of marriage is God, the author of the conjunction that is betwixt man and wife, as at the first, so now, is God, and he alone: manifest as here, so Gen. ii. 22, 'And the rib which the Lord hath taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her to the man.' Hence that Prov. ii. 17, it is called the 'covenant of God,' called so properly because he is the author of it; hence, Mat. xix. 6, 'Whom God hath joined together.'

*Reason* 1. Because the breach of this ordinance, either in man or woman, by his law is death. When either hath broken, he ordained that the nocent party should die; yea, he that abused a woman betrothed, it was death, Deut. xxii. 22, 23. Now God for no ordinance of man ever ordained death.

*Reason* 2. Because though parents and friends, and parties themselves, take care to provide matches after their humours, some one, some another, yet is it not in the power of them all, or any, to make liking or knit hearts, but only the Lord. To this some apply that Mat. xix. 6, whom God hath coupled, he working secretly, and leading their hearts one to another. Hence that Prov. xix. 14, 'House and riches are the inheritance of the fathers, but a prudent wife cometh of the Lord;' and xviii. 22, 'He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and receiveth favour of the Lord.'

*Use.* This teacheth us, that this is (as the apostle) an honourable estate, having such an honourable author as the God of gods. And it notes unto us the spirit of antichrist in the popes and church of Rome; yea, the spirit of Satan teaching such doctrine of devils. Innocent saith, it is to live in the flesh, and calleth it bed pleasure, and uncleanness, when he would condemn ministers' marriage by it: so Siricius and others have spoken most wickedly and despitefully of it, allowing simple fornication before it, in their priests.

*And wherefore one? Because he sought a godly seed.* The end of marriage in the holy intent of God, to have a holy seed, the church and religion propagated and increased. The meaning is not, as if holiness and sanctification came by nature, which is only of grace, for of such holiness he doth not speak, but the word is the seed of God; that is, that their children might be the sons and daughters of the true God, and pure religion, for it is here as the contrary was before, ver. 11, the daughters of a strange God, such as professed the worship not of the true God. The meaning of this is manifest by that which we have in Ezra ix. 1, 2, the holy seed matched with the people of the land; namely, they who possess true religion, and the true God, with those who falsify both; also 1 Cor. vii. 14, where holiness is nothing but to be within the covenant, and professors of the true God and religion. God then ordained marriage for the procreation of children, and that holy ones, the propagation of the church, and the increase of such as should truly worship him.

*Doct.* The end of marriage, the most proper and excellent end of it, is the procreation of children, for the propagation of God's church and God's worship. That it is an end, is here affirmed; that it is the most proper and excellent, I manifest, because it was the end of it before the fall, in man's perfection. Though sin had never come, yet this end was ordained of God, as Gen. i. 28, propagation of mankind, but specially the church; nay, by that is only meant the church, seeing they were in their perfection; and if then they had given themselves to propagation, or had continued in their first estate, they had brought forth still holy men in their perfect image, who should have been the seed of God. Lombard hath a speech:* After man's fall marriage is a remedy, which before the fall was only an office. The whole is true, but it is not the whole truth; for it is now *officium*, as well as then, to procreate children and propagate the church. Now that this is the end, that shews that he prohibiteth and reproveth so often unequal matches with infidels, because, though that may increase mankind, yet not the church, for that will spread rather idolatry than the true worship, Deut. vii. 3, 4, and Ezra ix. 1, 2. Hence it is that amongst the people of God, that virginity was a grief and barrenness, a shame, and so taken and accounted, because they could not increase the church. For the first, see Judges xi. 37, 40; for the second, see Luke i. 25. Hence the apostle forbiddeth to take into the church young widows for the service of the church, but will have them marry for the increase of the church, 1 Tim. v. 14.

*Reason* 1. Because this, to bring forth children, to increase his church and true worshippers, most procures that which is and ought to be the main end of all; that is, the glory of God. For not every one that brings forth children doth this, but the contrary; as the heathen and infidels, who bring them forth for idolatry and dishonour of God. This being to the contrary, is a principal end.

*Reason* 2. Because this is the duty enjoined them from God, to bring up their children in his true worship, Eph. vi. 4. Now the end of conjunction for procreation ought to be the same, that their end of education must be, of bearing and bringing forth, which is of bringing up.

*Use* 1. To reprove many, who, when they seek a wife or a husband, never think of this. I say not, they intend not procreation of children, and increasing of the world, as they say, but not the increase of God's church and a religious seed, that should further and set forward the true worship of God. Certain it is many of them take barrenness for a cross, and a reproach unto them, but it is only because they have

* Post lapsum hominis conjugium remedium est, quod ante lapsum duntaxat officium fuit.—*Lombard.*

not little ones to solace themselves withal, when they are young, or to leave their wealth to when they are of years, but never to propagate by them the church and true worship of God. It may be in our times they leave not unto them false worship; but that is only thanks to the state, not them, who, if the state did so bear it, would as well leave the one as the other to them. And that I may not slander them, I prove this from their choice, and from their use of their marriage estate. The first is apparent that they choose only for beauty, though they be the daughters of men, or for riches, for portion or person, and never respect religion; nay, if there be the other to be had, though their religion be suspected, and it be either none or corrupted, they will not forbear such marriages, though they join themselves to the daughters of a strange god, at the best but the daughters of men, never seasoned nor yet inclinable to the truth and true worship. In the law, he that would not marry his deceased brother's wife, but another, manifested that he never intended to raise up seed to his brother; so in this. He or she that matcheth not with the daughters of God, shew they never intend this. Again, in the use of marriages, many men and women, though they desire some children, not many, and those they have they may haply give them civil breeding and education, and bring them up in knowledge of human things, arts and sciences, and such like, but no instruction of religion. That which St Augustine complains of to God, as touching his father, may many justly complain of their parents:* *Non satageret idem pater, qualis crescerem tibi, aut quam castus, dummodo essem disertus.* So they have little care for piety and religion, to inform them and instruct them that way, but that they might, as he saith, *ut discerem sermonem facere, quam optimum, et persuadere dictione,** to be either an eloquent divine, or an absolute lawyer, or a fortunate merchant, or such like.

*Use* 2. That seeing there are three special ends of marriage: procreation of children and increase of the church; secondly, helps and comforts of this life; thirdly, a remedy against incontinency; though all must be aimed at, yet principally this. The other a man may well have, and have a lawful marriage; but without this it can be nothing so holy a marriage, seeing it wanteth the principal and the most holiest end, which was the end of it even in man's innocency, when he was without sin. Therefore ought every one principally to aim at this, and indeed to have it; and therefore ought they to choose so, or give consent that this may follow; not with those who have a false religion, or no religion, because it hardly will be that the church should be increased by them; for children will ever follow the worse part, though it be the weaker: for a little strength draws downward, it must be a great strength that must pull upward. Corruption is downward, and with the tide; religion is upward, and against it. And having a fit match, children ought to be desired of them, and to account it their honour, Ps. cxxviii. 3, not for cost or pains avoid it, or fear it; and having them, to give all care and diligence for their education, to bring them up in the fear and instruction of the Lord, to instruct them in knowledge of God and his true worship, and to edify them by example. For, *parentum exempla docere possunt, magis quam vox* (St Jerome); that when they are gone, they may praise them, as Augustine did his mother: *Majore solicitudine me parturiebat spiritu, quam carne pepererat* (*Confess.* v. 9). Their care was more to bring them up religiously, than their pains was to bring them into the world. They loved their souls better than their bodies, and they desired more that they might be God's sons and daughters than theirs; by which they shall increase their glory; for they who beget many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever, Dan. xii. 13; and they who shall increase God's church here, he shall increase their glory, as they his worship.

*Use* 3. Then, are not they bound, who have the gift of continency, not to marry. For though marriage be a remedy, yet is it not only nor principally; for both this is an end, and more principal. They who can preserve their chastity in virginity may desire it, but not absolutely, but in respect of some troubles and incumbrances, which for the most part accompany marriage, yet they may marry for this end, which is the more excellent. I do not say they are bound to marry for this end, because marriage is of those things which are indifferent, as Bernard speaks of virginity. It is not commanded, but advised, and only they who cannot contain are commanded to marry; yet, as there is more necessity in marrying for that end, so there is more religion in this end. In that, a man principally respects himself; in this, God, the increase of the church, and the enlarging of the kingdom of Christ. That which St Augustine speaketh (*de bono conjugali*, cap. 15) may be applied here: *Justus quandò cupit dissolvi et esse cum Christo, tamen sumit alimentum non cupiditate vivendi, sed officio consulendi ut maneat, quod necessarium est propter alios. Sic misceri fœminis in re nuptiarum officiosum fuit sanctis, non libidinosum. Quid enim sit cibus ad salutem hominis, hoc est concubitus ad salutem humani generis.* And so specially for the church and increase of God's kingdom; for though he can make children of stones, yet hath he ordained this means. Therefore little reason and less religion hath the church of Rome to prefer virginity before holy marriage; for besides that may be said to them, it were better they would approve virginity by their deeds, than praise it by their words. And (as Jerome *ad* Furiam), why doth the tongue sound out chastity, and the whole body shew forth uncleanness? Or as Epiphanius of the Origenists: You refuse marriage, but not lust. It is not holiness but hypocrisy that is in honour amongst you. Besides this, virginity is

* Confess. ii. 2, 3.

never, save only in some respect, better than marriage; but marriage is oftentimes absolutely better than virginity, and by no reason more than this, because this may increase the church, and bring forth sons and daughters to God, not that. Neither is it against this, that some object, that Christ saith, that after this life there is no marrying at all; and that 1 Cor. vii. 38, 'He that giveth her to marriage doth well, but he that giveth her not to marriage doth better.' For the first, it is not against us, seeing we speak of the state of this life only; after which, as there shall be no marriages, so no vows of virginity. And as for St Paul, *better* with him, is as much as *fit*, or more *commodious*. For if it were simply better, it were never lawful to do otherwise, which he alloweth. Therefore he thus spake, not for the nature of the thing, but in respect of circumstances, as you may see, verses 26, 28, 32, 35. Finally, if virginity be the more holy, why have they made marriage a sacrament rather than it? Sure, if it were more holy, it should rather be a sacrament than marriage.

*Therefore keep yourselves in your spirit.* The dehortation of the prophet from this vice, and the better that they may do it and not transgress, he persuades them to labour for sober minds and chaste affections. From thence riseth this sinning against their wives, which would easily be avoided if their minds were sober and chaste.

*Doct.* The way for a man to keep himself from actual and outward sin, and the practice of it, is to labour to keep his heart pure, and to take heed to that. On the contrary, if he neglect his heart, he shall be sure to be corrupt in the outward man, and to fall into outward sins against God and man. He may haply, in some sinister respect, and by some circumstances of time, place, or person, for want of opportunity, ability, and means, refrain them; but those things befalling him, he will easily fall into that. So much this exhortation sheweth. So much also that sheweth, Prov. iv. 23-25, 'Keep thine heart with all diligence; for thereout cometh life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and put wicked lips far from thee. Let thine eyes behold the right, and let thine eyelids direct the way before thee.' Mat. xv. 19, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries,' &c.; and James i. 13, 14, 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12.

*Reason* 1. Because the heart and spirit is the fountain of actions, whence they all spring; the other parts are but the channels, and it is a flowing fountain, not a standing water, which ever sends out such water as it hath. If, then, the fountain be clean and sweet, so will the channels be, and *è contra*.

*Reason* 2. Because it is the commander of the whole man, the whole life. Now, such as the commander, such is the subject; such as the captain, such are the soldiers. Much more here, for the conjunction is nearer, and when they are subject to it, as the weapon is to him that useth it, Rom. vi. 13. So that it commanding anything, that they all do; more than the centurion's servants, Luke vii.

*Quest.* Rom. vii. 25, Then the flesh and outward parts follow not the mind and the heart?

*Ans.* There is no opposition there betwixt the inward and outward, the heart and the body, but betwixt the part regenerate and the unregenerate; for by flesh it is usual with the apostle not to understand the body, but the unregenerate part, as in that place Gal. v. 17; not any opposition betwixt soul and body, but the fight of the unregenerate with the regenerate; and ver. 24, not the crucifying of the body, but of the unregenerate part. For the heart and inward parts, as far as they are unregenerate, are flesh also, and understood under the outward by the apostle.

*Use* 1. Then may a man certainly judge a man to have a corrupt heart, when he hath a polluted outward man, life, and conversation. *Vide* Malachi i. 8, Doctrine 1, Use 2.

*Use* 2. To reprove such as judge men to have corrupt hearts for the care and uprightness of their lives. *Vide ibid., ex* Use 1.

*Use* 3. To teach men, who desire any outward holiness, or to be free from external corruption or pollution, to look well to the heart, to keep sin, or to kill it within. For this is the best and the first, to purge the heart, and the other will be so.

*And let none transgress.* The dehortation from the evil, and the outward practice of it. Of the particular hath been spoken in the former verses, yet somewhat hence. It may be that some may think this speech hangs that way, that it may seem to favour free will, to call upon them to abstain from evil, which if it were not in their power, it were in vain thus to speak to them. I answer, This is no more than other precepts and exhortations in the word, which do but teach us what we ought to do, not what we are able, which is but to make us essay, and when we find not power, then to seek it elsewhere. In the law of works, God saith to us, Do what I command thee. In the law of faith, we say to God, What thou commandest us, enable us to do.* God, therefore, thus speaks to man, to make him speak again to him, commanding that he may require and obtain to do; seeing, Philip. ii. 13, 'It is God which worketh in you both the will and the deed, even of his good pleasure.' Bernard, in the audience of some, commending the grace of God, as that which he acknowledged in God did prevent him, and he found did make him to profit, and he hoped would perfect it in him, giving all to grace, and taking nothing to himself;† one replied, What then hast thou done, or what reward can thou look for, if God work all? To whom he answered, What counsel, then, dost thou give me, or how wouldst thou advise me? Give glory, saith he, to God, who hath pre-

* Lege operum dicit Deus, fac quod jubeo, lege fidei dicitur Deo, da quod jubes.—*Aug. de spirit. et lit.*

† Bernard de gratia et lib. Arbit. initio.

vented thee, excited thee, and begun this good in thee; and for that is to come, live worthily, that thou mayest approve thyself not unthankful for those thou hast received, and fit to receive more. Bernard replies, You give good counsel, but that is, but if you could make me able to obey and do it. For it is not so easy a thing to do, as to know what ought to be done; for these are diverse things, to lead a blind man, and to give strength to the weary.* For whosoever is a teacher, whatsoever he teacheth, cannot bestow goodness. Two things are needful to me: to be taught, and to be helped; thou being a man dost well instruct my ignorance, but the Spirit helps our infirmities, Rom. viii. Yea, he that gave me counsel by thy mouth, must also send me help by his own Spirit, that I may be able to do what thou advisest. By his grace I am willing, but cannot perform, unless he that wrought the will do also work the deed of his good pleasure. And when to this he replied,† Where, then, are our rewards? or where is our hope? He answereth with that: Titus iii. 5, 'Not by the works of righteousness which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Hence I gather, and upon this infer, that God that calls upon us by his word to do, must give us also power to do; then, therefore, he calleth, because he would have us cry to him for help. And as St Augustine: O man! acknowledge in every precept what strength thou shouldst have; in every reproof, what strength by thy own fault thou wantest; in every prayer, whence thou mayest have what thou wantest.‡

*Doct.* The hands must be purged as well as the heart; the outward man as the inward.

Ver. 16. *If thou hatest her, put her away, saith the Lord God of Israel; yet he covereth the injury under his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore keep yourselves in your spirit, and transgress not.*

*I hate putting away, saith the Lord God of Israel.* In this verse the prophet proceeded to the third main sin here reproved in his people, divorces; not simply condemning divorce, as if in no case it were lawful, but for every vain cause, and light dislike, when they heard or disliked them, for that to put them away, is that he reproves. In the verse we observe two things: first, the reproof of this sin; secondly, an admonition general, including the particular. In the first, which is the sin, we observe the amplifications of it, which is first from God's hatred; secondly, from an effect of those husbands, who used and practised divorces, that they made the law of God a covert, to cover with it that violent injury and indignity they did to their wives, as men cover the body, and defaults of it, with their garment.

*If thou hatest her, put her away.* Some think this dependeth upon the former, as an objection made by this people in their own defence against the former accusation, as unjustly cast upon them, because they had not committed polygamy, seeing they had put away their first wives, and that according to the law, Deut. xxiv. The prophet answers, The Lord hates putting away, and will not endure that they should make his law a cover for their iniquity. Some, as St Jerome, understand them as words of the priest and people in their own defence, pretending the law of God for that they did; but most take them as God's words, shewing his dislike of their dealing. And if the words be read thus, as our vulgar translation hath them, then they think them spoken by an irony, which they manifest, as they suppose, by the words following, by which they take a judgment to be threatened. And they think it is manifest by the like, Eccles. xi. 9; but seeing the words in the original will not bear the reading, neither the second sentence will carry the sense they would have of them, they must be thus read: *For I hate putting away;* or, *putting away is an hatred unto me.* It is a thing that I am so far from approving and liking, that I utterly hate and abhor. Whatsoever Moses, for the hardness of your hearts, did grant unto you, and so remitted the judicial law, that it proceeded not against you to death, as adulterers, when you had put them away for slight causes, and married others, yet that hath not excused it before me, but that it is still a sin, and odious unto me; it is that which my soul abhorreth.

*Saith the Lord God of Israel.* This he addeth for confirmation of the former. That the Lord God of Israel doth affirm and testify this, who hath before professed himself author of the conjunction betwixt them, and witness of that covenant, and doth profess himself protector of the whole nation of the Israelites; and therefore with what indignation must he needs behold their dealing with their wives! And how can he suffer that indignity they are offered, to be put away, and others taken in their places, specially when they are strangers and infidels?

*Yet he covereth the injury under his garment.* The second amplification, because they pretended law for that they did, covering it by that, as the body with a garment, which maketh him to abhor it the more; to pretend his law for them when it is clean against them, and all that was, was but a permission by Moses in his care and compassion of the women who were abused by them.

* Nec quivis doctor statim et dator erit boni, quodcunque docuerit. Duo mihi sunt necessaria, doceri et juvari. Tu quidem homo rectè consulis ignorantiæ, sed (si verum sentit Apostolus) Spiritus adjuvat infirmitatem nostram, Rom. viii. Imo vero qui mihi per os tuum ministrat consilium, ipse mihi necesse est ministret per Spiritum suum adjutorium quo valeam implere quod consulis. Ecce enim ex ejus munere velle adjacet mihi, perficere autem non invenio, nisi qui dedit velle, det et perficere pro bona voluntate.

† Ubi ergo sunt merita nostra? aut ubi est spes nostra?

‡ O homo in præceptione cognosce quid debeas habere, in corruptione tuo te vitio non habere: in oratione unde accipias quid vis habere.—*De corrupt. et gratia*, cap. 3.

To the former sentence some add *for*, being a particle which hath the force, not of a cause, but oftentimes of an affirmation; and to this *because*, shewing that therefore he hated it the more, *because* they thus covered it.

*Saith the Lord of hosts.* He that is able and can command all the hosts of heaven and earth, to revenge the injuries and indignities done to his people and daughters.

*Therefore keep yourselves in your spirits.* The admonition such as we have had before; that is, seeing you know what the Lord hates, and what he loves and likes, look well to yourselves, and your own hearts; take heed of transgressing and dealing perfidiously with your wives.

*Doct.* Divorce, that is, for a man to put away his wife for any cause save only for the cause of adultery, and for adultery, is utterly unlawful, and forbidden of God; a thing that doth dislike and displease him; so the prophet affirmeth here. This our Saviour, the oracle of his Father, more faithful in the house than Moses, doth shew and teach, Mat. v. 32, Mat. xix. 9. It hath his force, 'I say unto you;' that is, many assign other causes, but I this one, only adultery. To this we may add that the apostle allows not a man to put away his wife for infidelity, 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13; only if the infidel will depart and make a desertion, he sets then the believer at liberty, but else he allows him not to put her away. And if not for idolatry, then not for other causes of far less weight.

*Reason* 1. Because, as Christ himself giveth the reason, the bond betwixt them is greater than that which is betwixt parents and children, Mat. xix. 5, for it was before that; for Adam and Eve were man and wife before they were parents, and they were man and wife that they might be parents. And again, the bond is greater, because the good is more public, for this for the propagation of mankind, that only for the good of the parents. Now then, if the bond be greater, and that is not to be broken for any cause, then not this. If that rather than this, then not this for small and frivolous causes, but only for that which he who bound the knot, hath allowed the dissolution of it.

*Reason* 2. Because this were for man to take upon him to sever that which God hath joined, when it is done not for such a cause as he hath allowed it to be for; for when it is for such a cause, then is it God and not man that hath dissolved it.

*Use* 1. To reprove all those who allow and contend for many other causes that divorces may be made, besides adultery; which opinion of theirs they would establish first from the law. Deut. xxiv. 1, 'When a man taketh a wife and marrieth her, if so be she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath spied some filthiness in her, then let him write a bill of divorcement, and put it in her hand, and send her out of his house.' To which I answer and oppose Mat. xix., so that if it were lawful then, yet not now; neither do I herein make Christ contrary to the decrees of God by Moses; but we must understand that that law in Deuteronomy was a civil and judicial law; and Christ he meddles not with civil or judicial courses, but moral things. For they who govern commonwealths, propound this end unto themselves, that if two evils, or two inconveniences, happen and meet, they admit the less, lest they fall into the greater; as in some cities they have admitted stews and harlots, to avoid, as they say, greater evils, which the law of God will not suffer in his commonwealth. And so to this purpose of marriage, when unhappy, unfit, and unequal marriages are made, the one of these two inconveniences seemed to be necessary, that they who hated their wives, would either perpetually afflict and vex them, and at length kill them, or they must have liberty to put them away. This latter was thought more tolerable, therefore it was allowed in that commonwealth; but so allowed as if God by it would make them keep their wives, and use them better.* For, first, God would have him make a bill of divorce, by that to affect so hard and cruel a husband, and to drive him to consider what an unfit and unworthy a thing it was for him to put away one he had enjoyed so long; for we use to weigh more those things we write, than those we speak. Secondly, that if he put her away, he was not allowed at all to take her again, and therefore to make him not to do it, but advisedly, when haply upon second thoughts he would not do it. Thirdly, if he gave her a bill of divorce, it must express the cause why he did it, clearing her that it was not for adultery, and accusing himself that it was for some other slight cause, which he ought and would, if there had been any love in him at all, have covered. All which sheweth, that God did it for their infirmities, and would have restrained them from it by this means; and that he granted unto them was only judicial, that is, so much as might free them from the hand of the magistrate, that they were not punishable by him, but not that which made it no sin against the law moral; and before him, they were only freed *in foro civili, non conscientiæ.* It is like to our law of usury, which frees men from punishment of the law if they take not above such a sum, but frees them not from sin before God, providing for the good of the borrower, both that they might borrow, and when they did, not be too much oppressed; but so, he that lends is an usurer, and so a thief before God; so in this. For the Lord, as a wise lawgiver, in his judicial laws, permitted in a civil respect some things evil in themselves, for the avoiding of a greater mischief; not to allow or justify the same from the guilt of sin, as before him in the court of conscience, but to exempt the same from civil punishment in the external court before the magistrate. Such is this we speak of. Hence it is that we read not in the Scripture of any man of note for piety and holiness which ever used this, or ever gave any wife a bill of

* The permission argues no simple lawfulness.

divorce. For whereas Abraham put away Hagar and Ishmael, it is not against this; for as he did it by the counsel of the wife, so by the commandment of God, Gen. xxi. 12. And none that were godly using, or practising it once, though they were subject to the same inconveniences that others were, and so shews that they held it not simply, and in conscience lawful.

Again, they say that, 1 Cor. vii., the apostle allows divorce for another cause. It is answered that the apostle speaketh not of a divorce, but of a desertion; not of putting away the wife for any fault of hers, but when she forsakes the husband for the faith and piety that is in him, and so *è contra;* for the apostle only saith, if the unbelieving depart, let him depart, but allows not the believer in any sort to put away the unbeliever; nay, commands him to live with her, if she will abide with him; and so only enjoineth him to suffer a desertion, not to make a divorce. And so this establisheth no other cause.

Again, they say, if for adultery, then much more for crimes greater than it, and so there are more causes of divorce. This will be answered out of the former, for if the apostle allow not for infidelity, then not for greater; for that is sure far greater; and if their reason were good, then would this follow. Infidelity is a greater sin than adultery, therefore ought a man to be put to death for that, because for this he owes to die by God's law. Again, adultery doth not make the divorce, because of the greatness of the sin; but because of the opposition of it to marriage; it is far more contrary to it. The reason is, because in marriage, man and wife ought to be one flesh. Now adultery is that which doth divide them, and make not one but two. And so doth neither infidelity, blasphemy, idolatry, neither any such sin; for these and the like sins are more repugnant to God, and separate men from him more than adultery, but it is more opposite to matrimony; which is manifest, because amongst infidels, idolaters, and blasphemers, marriage is good and lawful, though not holy.

Other things they object, as coldness and inability of some incurable disease, if the one go about to kill or poison the other, if the civil laws allow it. But they are answered, that some of these may hinder a marriage it be not, not break it when it is; in others, the magistrate is to be looked to for help. The laws of magistrates causing divorce for other things, if they be capital they ought put them to death, and so end the controversy; if criminal, of less force, their law is against the law of God, and not tolerable.

*Use* 2. To reprove and condemn all those who practise contrary; who, though the law allow not other divorces, but for adultery, yet they, upon dislike they take at their wives, or liking of others, make nothing to send them home to their friends, and live separated from them, and only for their lusts' sake; bear more indignity and discontent from a harlot in a year, than they had from their lawful wives in many years before; hearkening to such bad counsellers, as Memucan was to the king Ahasuerus, Esther i. 16, 19, persuading him to put away Vashti for one disobedience, and for some miscarriage to send her away, and take another in her place; forgetting, as St Augustine speaketh to Polletius, that they are Christians, and therefore that they ought to be prone and inclinable to mercy and indulgence, and not be so hard and cruel, not remembering the example of Christ who pardoned the adulteress, John viii., shewing how full of love and compassion husbands should be towards their penitent wives, if in adultery, much more in less things and offences. But these are like those who Augustine speaks of, who because of their bitterness to their wives, that they might do it with less reproof, have razed out that chapter, or that story at least out of it, so they could be content to raze this out. But heaven and earth shall pass when this shall stand; and they who fear not to offend against it, shall feel the weight of God's anger hereafter; for his anger and hatred will be punishment and judgment.

*Use* 3. Not as the disciples inferred upon it, Mat. xix. 10, 'If the matter be so between man and wife, it is not good to marry;' for they are well, and with good reason, checked by him, seeing, ver. 11, 12, as he said unto them, 'All men cannot receive this thing, save they to whom it it is given, for there are some chaste who were so born of their mother's belly; and there be some chaste which be made chaste by men; and there be some chaste which have made themselves chaste for the kingdom of heaven. He that is able to receive this, let him receive it.' For to some who cannot abstain, marriage is as necessary as meat, drink, and sleep, as Luther said sometimes, foolishly cavilled at by our papists. That is, then, not the use of it; but this, for men to be wary how they choose, and women how they are persuaded or give consent, seeing it is a knot not to be broken again for any dislike, or discontents whatsoever, save only in the matter of adultery. If it were a matter, as common bargains be, that a man might lose his earnest, if it were with some hazard of his honesty and good report; or, if they were taken as some men take prentices, upon liking; or buy horses to lose so much, if they dislike and return them; or if Solon's law were in force, that he who did put away his wife should give her dower and portion with her again: it were the less to be thought of; but when it is so dissoluble, not to be loosed or broken, but perpetual, it requires a great care, when it is stronger and firmer than the bond betwixt parents and children. Therefore should the man take heed how he chooseth for beauty, for profit, and great portion, and not for wisdom and virtue, though the other things be not in the like proportion. What is more profitable than the bee? saith St Chrysostom, *in Ps.* l., yet hath it a sting. What fairer than a peacock? but the comeliness only is in the feathers, not the fruit. So, many, with their

great portions and great beauty, have often their stings, and are no fit helps; that a man had better buy a wife than be bought to her, specially when there is no parting; and better to have the contemptible ant, as he speaketh, which is the mistress of wisdom, the meaner and he more housewifely, who may soon be worth her portion in good comfort and contentment. So the woman, how she is won or persuaded for the person, or riches, or kindred of a man, because he is able to clothe her in fine apparel, to deck her with gold and pearl, and many such things, having no wisdom to govern or instruct her, or to bring up his children in the instruction of the Lord, no love but lust; for, seeing the knot is perpetual, and no choice allowed again, she may buy all that dear enough. Therefore it is good to be advised in their choice, lest repentance should come too late, and be bought too dear, and yet make no amends, for they cannot be free. If the law of polygamy were in force, that a man might have two wives, the one hated, the other beloved, or this of divorce, he might put her away at his pleasure upon dislike, and so *è contra*, the matter were small, and men might be as careless of this as of the other things; but whenas he hath made one for one, and made the bond so inviolable, that there is no parting till one be the other's executor; seeing things are thus, it is not good not to marry, but to be careful how he or she marrieth. Chrysostom, persuading men to be careful of their souls, reasoneth thus: *Omnia nobis duplicia Deus dedit, duos oculos, duas aures, duas manus, duos pedes; si igitur horum alterum lædatur, per alterum necessitatem consolamur; animam verò unam dedit nobis, si hanc perdiderimus, quanam vivemus?* (*Vide* Chrysostom, *Hom.* xxii. *ad pop. Ant.*) So God hath allowed us two friends, or two servants, or two houses, or two coats; one may supply the want of the other; but one wife, and her for life, and the term of a man's days. How ought he to use her well, and choose her carefully! And so of a woman.

*I hate putting away.* Thus he first condemns this sin, because it is against his will and mind, that he dislikes and hates it, and by this dissuades from it; not that we must conceive there is any such passion in God, or affection, but these things are, as Augustine speaketh of anger, so of this. It is not any perturbation of his mind, but the judgment by which he inflicts punishment upon sin; and so in the whole he dissuades from this, because else God's judgments and punishments will come upon them, howsoever they escape men's.* Now this is not proper to this, but common to others, whence we have a general doctrine.

*Doct.* Men ought to avoid and eschew unjust divorces, and every other sin, for fear of the judgments of God and his hatred and punishments; which thing is manifest in the law, whenas every prohibition is not without a threat and a judgment. Hence that Deut. xxviii. 15; and in the particulars through the whole law, wheresoever God forbids any sin, usually there is a judgment joined with it. The Spirit speaketh not so in vain, but that he would have men to avoid them for those. The point is proved: Gen. xvii. 14, Exod. xxii. 22–24, Isa. i. 20, Rom. vi. 23. Solomon often threateneth adulterers with shame, and poverty, and disease, to restrain them from it; and St Paul with the judgments to come in the life to come, Heb. xiii.

*Reason* 1. Because of their corruptions, who, as they love not righteousness, nor desire or hunger after it for righteousness' sake, and in conscience, which makes God give them promises and propound rewards unto them to make them obey. So they hate not sin, neither fly it because it is sin, but as children do bees, not because they are bees, but because they have a sting; so they sin, because it is hurtful, therefore hath the Lord propounded these; not as desirous of their punishment, but to have them not to offend, as princes add penalties to their laws.

*Reason* 2. Because as the malice of Satan hath feared men from doing well, for fear of harms, losses, and disgraces which they shall find in the world, and others before them, which hath made God balance them with his promises, so his coming* tells them that unrighteousness hath many pleasures, profits, preferments, and shews them many that have risen that way and by such means; therefore God shews them then the sour of it, that for all such things all must come to his judgments.

*Reason* 3. Because by them they may subdue and tame their flesh and the corruption of it, and make subject to the spirit, which always of itself rebelleth against the spirit, and often ruleth over it, to lead it to sin and disobedience.

*Use* 1. If fear of judgments be a means to restrain men from sin, it tells us that many men are void even of this servile fear. *Vide* Mal. i. 6, first effect of servile fear, *Use* 1.

*Use* 2. To teach every man who would keep himself from it, to endeavour and labour for this fear.

*Saith the Lord God of Israel.* This for confirmation; not the prophet but the Lord, the master and not the minister, speaks this, which is thus set out to shew the care he had of that people, that he had taken the protection and defence of them. Now this people being a type of the church, as well as the church, it may teach us this

*Doct.* God is the protector and defender of his church and children, he that doth keep, preserve, and defend it. *Vide* Rev. ii. 1, Christ 'walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks.'

*Yet he covereth the injury under his garment.* The amplifying of their sin, that they pretended the law of God as a cover of it, that it might be no sin unto them.

* Non est perturbatio animi ejus, sed judicium, quo irrogatur pœna peccato.—*Aug.*

* Qu. 'cunning'?—ED.

*Doct.* It is a thing which makes their sins the greater, who pretend the law for a cover of their sin and iniquities, of cruelty or oppression, unfaithfulness, or whatsoever other corruption. Such was these men's dealing, such was that of Jezebel, 1 Kings xxi. 13, and of them, John xix. 7, 'The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.' And James ii. 8, 9.

*Reason* 1. Because the law was given either for a light and lantern to keep men they should not sin or transgress, or after a gloss * to let them see their sins, James i., or as a cock to Peter. Now to pervert it to the contrary is to abuse the law, and so to add to their former sin this second, and to increase both. To make that which is good cause of sin.

*Reason* 2. Because this argues that the sin is not in infirmity, but obstinacy, when men any ways defend and excuse it, more when they excuse it by that which doth accuse it, and busy their heads to wrest it to bolster out their sin, when they do as Jerome (Oceano) of some, who, *non voluntatem legi, sed legem jungunt voluntati*, frame the law to their wills, and not their wills and ways to the law.

*Use* 1. To condemn and convince of greater sin all such sinners as do not simply sin, but would sin with warrant from that which is the only opposite to all sin whatsoever, and make this, as some men do Christ's sufferings, the pack-horse of all their sin; so this the patron and defence; first, here are condemned all heretics, who do not only err, but defend it with colour of the Scripture; for never any heretic hath been who did not pretend the word for their heresies. The Scriptures they oftentimes contemn, because they find them little to favour them; yet use they them as merchants do their counters: sometime they stand with them for hundreds and thousands, and sometime for ciphers. When the letter helps, they urge with full mouth; but when the spirit hurts and crosseth them, they appeal to others, and either fathers or councils, or the pope, must impose a sense upon them; not draw it out of them, and so have no error, but either by the letter or the enforced sense they will maintain. As by these words, 'he that takes not up his cross and followeth me,' certain monks made them crosses of wood, and carried upon their shoulders.† Cassianus (Colla 8, cap. 3) by those words, 'Here are two swords,' the pope's temporal and spiritual jurisdiction. By those, 'The Lord made two great lights, the sun the greater;' therefore the pope is greater than the emperor. By those, 'They that walk in the flesh cannot please God,' Innocent condemned marriages, and stablished single life, and many such things. Like unto these are many other, who search the Scripture for no other purposes but to see if they can find anything in it which will defend them in their sin.* Therefore we shall find a voluptuous man, who hath no knowledge in the Scripture, for to further his salvation, hath that to uphold uncleanness, Acts xv. 29, words without sense. The wanton for her painting, that 'oil makes a cheerful countenance.' The drunkard, that 'wine was given to make the heart cheerful.' The covetous, that 'he who provides not for his own is worse than an infidel.' The usurer hath his distinctions of biting and multiplying usury, of lending to the poor and stranger, and to rich and brother, of putting money into the bank, and such like.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to take heed how he goes about to cover any sin he hath committed by the word of God; for as he cannot do it without injuring of the word, which is most pure and holy, so that injury will by the word redound to God himself, who hath given and written that word; for if it favour any sin, he must needs do the same, when he and his word are one. Now it would be monstrous impiety that any one should make God the patron of his sin; as if a man should make the prince the cause of his treason, it were without excuse and hope of pardon. But this is done when the word is made a covert, and so a man's sin is increased, as Adam's was, who accused both Eve and God; 'The woman thou gavest me,' the word thou gavest me. But to avoid this, we must endeavour to read the word without prejudice, or being fore-possessed with opinion. Many men make the Scriptures favour their errors, because they read them with resolute minds to hold that they have, and so seek but to confirm themselves out of that they read, and apply it to their errors, and not their minds to it; and sometimes stick upon the letter, and sometime make it speak that it never thought, knowing not that it is like to a fertile field, which bringeth forth many things which nourish the life of man, without any seething or roasting by the heat of the fire. Some things that are hurtful, unless they be boiled; some things unboiled offend not, and yet having felt the heat of the fire, are more wholesome; some that are in their kinds profitable for beasts, though not for men; so the Scripture hath some things, literally understood, which profit and help, as 'Hear, O Israel,' &c. Others, unless they be mitigated by the heat of the spiritual fire, and be spiritually understood, hurt more than profit; as that, 'Sell thy coat, and buy a sword;' 'If he strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left;' 'Take up his cross, and follow me,' and such like. Therefore at all times it is not good to take the words, but labour for the sense, specially not in those places where they seem to favour anything condemned in

* Qu. 'glass'?—ED.

† Make them (as Aug. of the Donat). Accipientes ergo perverso corde Scripturas, non eas faciunt obesse nobis, sed sibi.—*Cont. lit. par.* l. ii. c. 1.

Non periclitor docere ipsas quoque scripturas, sic esse ex Dei voluntate dispositas, ut hæreticis materiam subministrent, cum legam oportere hæreses esse, quæ sine Scripturis esse non possunt.—*Tertull. præscript. advers. hæret.*

* Affectus locutus est et non intellectus.—*Bernar. sup. citat.* ser. 87, A.

plain words in another; for there, saith Augustine, is certainly a figure.

Ver. 17. *Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?*

*Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.* The prophet proceedeth now unto the last sin reproved in this chapter, which was in this people. The former was touching men, this is concerning God; the former dishonesty and unfaithfulness towards men, this impiety against God. Before, he accused them, as some speak, of felony: now, of treason; before, for their deeds: now, for their words and speeches contumeliously uttered against God, denying the providence of God both over the good and bad, not providing for the one, and not punishing the other. It is thought that the Jews, being now returned out of Babylon from their captivity, and saw both the Babylonians and divers other nations and people to abound with wealth, ease, and glory, though they served their idols, and themselves the only worshippers of the true God, to be in want and poverty, they thought and spake that God he regarded not them that worshipped him, but the wicked were good in his sight, and he delighted in them; or, at least, if it be not so, where is God that judgeth uprightly?

*Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.* Some think the weariness here spoken of is a fainting which cometh from too much striving and labouring, whence cometh a remitting of the care and endeavour which he took beforetime. And so the meaning they would have to be, You say, the Lord, who is merciful and aboundeth with mercy, and hath been ever constant in it, and prone to it, he is now wearied in descending* and providing for, and in doing good unto those that serve him; and so it should not be a weariness imposed upon him, but one that is imputed unto him. And so, only in opinion, it should be so, and not in truth; but how this will agree with the prophet's answer to their demand, I cannot see, neither can it possibly; for then he would have said, In that ye say the Lord hath no care, or hath cast off the respect of his; but he speaketh otherwise. The meaning is, then, you have grieved and vexed the Lord with your speeches, and reproaches, and blasphemies against him. It is spoken after the manner of men, because they are so with the speeches of others, like that Isa. xliii. 24, 'Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.'

*Yet ye say, Wherein*, &c. Their answer for themselves, putting him to his proof, and to make good that he had spoken, and shew wherein, else would they not confess their faults.

*When ye say.* Though not in his hearing who was able and would reprove them, but amongst the ignorant people in companies, where they came, still inculcating and repeating such things, and so to make them cast off all fear of God and care of honesty and piety.

*He that doth evil.* Not the good nor the righteous is respected of God, but the wicked; for they flourish and prosper, and he is good in his sight, that is, approved of God.

From men they proceed to approach to God and to impeach and disgrace him, and cast reproaches upon him; and, being unfaithful, injurious, and unjust to men, they are irreligious towards God.

*Doct.* They who are unfaithful and unjust towards men will be irreligious towards God; such as have no care of honesty will have no care of piety, not of charity, not of religion, and *è contra*. So much this insinuates, and that 1 John iv. 20, 'If any man say I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar; for how can he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God whom he hath not seen?' and James i. 27, 'Pure religion, and undefiled before God, even the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their adversity, and to keep himself unspotted of the world.' Tit. ii. 12, Mat. xxv. 42. Not that men shall not be condemned for irreligion, but that this is manifest to others, and shews that there can be no religion.

*Reason* 1. Because men they see and converse withal daily, and so not with God. Now, if they have no care of the present, what is expected towards the absent, not of visible, none of the invisible, as 1 John iv. 20.

*Reason* 2. Because care of religion proceedeth from the love of God, which makes Christ, Mat. xxii. 27, include the whole first table, which is concerning God and religion, under the title of love. Now, there can be no love of God but where there is love to man; for that 1 John iv. 20. Men love not the person, if not the picture; love to man is natural, to God spiritual; that as natural men, this as spiritual and regenerate. If any be unnatural, is it not like he will and must needs be irreligious?

*Use* 1. To teach us not to wonder, as many men do, that there is so much impiety and profaneness in our age, so little or no care of the Lord's day, little or no love of the word, zeal for God's glory, care of his worship, hatred of idolatry, and such like, but, *è contra*, much and great profaning of the Lord's day, &c. We are in the age wherein charity is grown cold, and iniquity hath gotten the upper hand. It is true which Augustine saith, *Enchi.* i. *ad Laur.* cxvii., *Regnat carnalis cupiditas ubi non est Dei charitas;* and it will be as true if *ubi* be placed before *regnat*, for there can be never any true and constant love to religion where there is not true love to God; that cannot be, unless men be sanctified and regenerated. Now, sanctification is as some say of heart's-ease, that grows not in every man's garden, less is it in every man's

* Qu. 'defending'?—ED.

house; so not sanctification, it is in few men's hearts, and manifest not to be there where there is injustice and dishonesty, no love of God; and would we marvel to see men perform no duties to those they are known not to love? Love and affection being the ground of all duty: if not, why this? Nay, rather, seeing the wickedness, injustice, and oppression of the time is such, we should rather wonder there is any religion at all, than that there is no more, that there is any love to the truth, &c., than so little.

*Use* 2. To teach us what to judge of many men who seem religious, who will sit at Gamaliel's feet, have Christ to teach in their streets and churches; he shall eat at their tables and houses, and yet they are workers of iniquity, live in some one gross sin or another of injustice and oppression, deceit, or unfaithfulness, and uncleanness; yea, after they have been convinced by the word, remain still in them. Know them to be but hypocrites; they may talk of religion, but they have no truth of it; they may have the show of godliness, but not the power of it. They honour the word and ministers only as Saul would have Samuel to accompany him, for his own honour before the people, or some other sinister respect. It is not a sure consequent, a man is careful of the duties of the second table, and therefore religious; because hitherto by nature he hath been so, and there are some civil hypocrites as well as religious hypocrites; but the contrary consequent is good. And oftentimes the issue of things proves not to be good; for though they hold out a while in such profession, yet at length they fall away, either when some trouble comes for it, that they may enjoy their lives and liberties, and so their sins. And so, as Justin Martyr, *Apol. Rel. Christian.* made his reason, that they were not as they were accused, voluptuous, intemperate, and such like, because they so willingly embraced death for their profession's sake, for then they would have renounced that, and deceived princes to have enjoyed these; so on the contrary. Or else they, after twice or thrice standing, are deprived of all that, as Samson was of his strength by Delilah.

*Use* 3. To teach every man that would either preserve himself from irreligion, or approve that to others, that he seemeth to have, to keep himself from or to put from him all injustice, dishonesty, and unfaithfulness towards men, for else this will abandon religion out of his heart, and devour up all true profession, as Pharaoh's lean kine devoured his fat; and this will make men judge, as well they may, and with warrant, that there is no truth of religion in all that show. I deny not but a man may have the truth of religion, and should have wrong done him if he be otherwise judged of, and yet lie in some sin against the second table, either because he knew it not, or the strength of the temptation hath blinded him, or the blow he had by it hath for a while stammered him, as did David. But if they be once convinced of it and wakened, as David; if Nathan have reproved them plainly, yet not so particular, yet so as they knew they were the men; if they hold on in that sin, it will soon make them irreligious; for it will make them out of love with the word and ministry, and then he that judgeth shall have his sentence sealed up by God. And Christ shall make it good with that: Luke xiii. 27, 'I tell you I know ye not, whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.'

*Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.* Their words were against God; they spake wickedly and blasphemy against him.

*Doct.* To blaspheme God, to speak impiously of him, of his providence, power, government, and such like, is a fearful sin, James ii. 7.

*Use* 1. If this be such a sin, and God have an action against this people for it, how justly may he? Nay, hath he taken a controversy against us and our city, when our words are still against him, for how is every place defiled with blasphemies and oaths, the streets and houses, taverns, and men's private families, shops, and offices? Who is free from it? Neither master nor servant, husband nor wife, parents nor children, old nor young, buyer nor seller, magistrate nor subject. If the law for blasphemies were in force that they should be stoned, what a cry would be in our city! more than when the first-born was slain in Egypt, for old and young should be taken away; but if only the guiltless must cast stones at them, scarce one of twenty would be found to accuse or execute others. This sin begun is a swaggerer, a stabber, and if it had continued there it had been well; but to cease upon a civil city and civil people, that there should be as many oaths sworn within a small compass in it as in a great band of such desperate ruffians, it is most fearful; and if God devour them with the sword for such blasphemies, why not us with the plague? I say nothing of other blasphemies, of accusing the providence, power, and government of God.

*Use* 2. To teach us to resist and reform this vice, every man in himself, and in his, and labour to fear the great and fearful name of God, and use it with reverence, and speak of him and his providence and works with all humility and honour. Give him as much honour as to our garments which are more precious than others; for how is it not most absurd that a man, having one garment more excellent than others, cannot endure it continually to be abused, and yet rashly and upon every occasion abuse the name of God? Let us not think those excuses of *necessity*, and *we cannot be believed*, will go for current before God, or *he provoked me;* for so the first blasphemer could have said for himself. But as no man will drink poison willingly, or upon any necessity, so should he not take an oath. *De probo dicturo dicimus, os tuum ablue et ita commemora: nunc verò nomen super omne nomen venerandum, in omni terrâ admirabile, quod audientes Dæmones horrent, temerarie circumferemus,*

*O consuetudinem!* (Chrysost. *Ho.* xxvi. *ad pop. Ant.*) And to make a more speedy reformation, write upon the walls of thy house and of thy heart that same flying book, Zech. v. 2, 3. And think this is flying to judgment, and so fly thou as fast from thine oaths. And as the Egyptians thrust Israel out of Egypt, because for them the first-born of the king and peasant was slain, so do with your oaths.

*Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.* The prophet saith not barely, your words are against the Lord, as Isa. iii. 8, but the Lord, is wearied and vexed with them, speaking after the manner of men, who are vexed with things that displease them; and so noting how greatly God was displeased with these sins, how they offend him.

*Doct.* The blasphemies and other sins of men do marvellously offend and vehemently displease the Lord; which as it is affirmed here, and the like, Isa. xliii. 24, so as many threats and menaces, so many judgments executed, sometimes upon the whole world, sometimes upon general cities, sometimes upon particular persons, through the holy story doth manifest no less; because when men do lay about them, and smite and punish, it argues they are offended and displeased.* Hereto belongs these and the like, Ps. cvi. 29, 'Thus they provoked him to anger with their own inventions, and the plague brake in upon them;' Isa. lxiii. 10, 'But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit; therefore was he turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them;' Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'

*Reason* 1. Because it is the transgression of his law, John iii. 4. Now he gave his law to have obedience, which is delightful unto him, 1 Sam. xv. 22. He takes pleasure in obedience; then disobedience and transgression must needs displease him.

*Reason* 2. Because he is most holy, just, and good; yea, goodness, justice, and holiness itself. Now as every man is more good, so is he least suspicious of evil in another; but when it is apparent, he is most displeased with it; for as things rejoice and delight in their like, so are they distasted and displeased with their unlike, and that which is so contrary to them. The more righteous the judge is, the more he hates iniquity and sin; he is righteousness itself. The sun is the greatest enemy to darkness, because it hath light of itself, and, as it were, is light itself.

*Reason* 3. Because it works the destruction of the creature, which he loves, James i. 15. Now then loving his creature, he must needs dislike and hate this. Parents hate and dislike those creatures, men or beasts, who work the ruin of their children, the fruit of their bodies; and generally whatsoever a man loves, he hates that which worketh the ruin of it.

*Use* 1. For sins past which a man hath committed, he must be grieved and displeased with himself that ever he committed any such things, by which he hath grieved and vexed so holy and righteous a God. And this ought he to do, if either he have love to God or to himself: to God, because where men love they are loath to offend, and grieved when they have displeased them;* so that it is a note of a graceless child, one without any love to his father, that is never grieved when he sees his father grieved and vexed with his lewdness and evil carriage. He may be a child, but he is a prodigal son, and shall never be accepted till he return and shew himself grieved that he hath grieved him. True love seeks to please the beloved rather than itself, and is more grieved that it hath displeased such one than if it had offended itself. And whereas men are more displeased of the loss of their own pleasure than to the displeasure of God, how can it be but that self-love is above God's love? As (Salvian saith) whom a man is loathest to offend, he most loves,† of himself or God; but where God's love reigneth as it ought, there this dislike and grief will be. And if this should not make them dislike and grieve, yet if any man indeed love himself, he will dislike and grieve for them, because if he do it not voluntarily he shall do it by force and constraint; for if he judge not himself, and so take revenge of himself for his offending of God, the Lord will, and make him grieve, though oftentimes not as he ought‡ (because such grief in judgments is not always true grief); yet he shall grieve as he would not, for God will bring upon him that which will make him grieve, some judgment or other, to shew that as he loves them who love him, so will he grieve those who grieve him, which if it be come upon them they shall find that true, that a disease is not so soon removed as it is easily prevented. So here. And that it will grieve them, as in diseases; not the disease, but that they neglected the means by which they might have prevented it.

*Use* 2. For the time to come; men ought to put away their sins, and keep themselves from committing new sins, or renewing the old, for it is that which is a grief unto the Lord and his Spirit. And should not men avoid the grieving of God? not words and works which are against God, and do displease him? If sin were a thing which God regardeth not, and he were no ways affected or moved with it to grief or displeasure, less matter were to be made of it, it were no great matter though men satisfied themselves and pleased themselves; but being as it is so displeasing to the Lord, and such a grief unto him, it is not only to be sorrowed for committed, but carefully to be avoided.

* Ira in deo non est affectio, sed pœna in nos eo vocabulo nominatur.—*Chrysost.*

* Semper in amore cautela est; nemo melius diligit quam qui maxime veretur offendere.—*Sal. Ep.*

† Qui satis diligunt non citò offenduntur: sed si non facilè offendunt.

‡ *As Chrysostom of man,*—Qui fuerit sub vinculis bonus, nunquam erit profectò bonus: simulac enim vi nulla cogitur, liber ipse ad ingenium subito conversus iterum discedet,—so I of this grief.

If he be a foolish son, that is an heaviness to his mother, Prov. x. 1, what is he that is a grief to God his Father?* How foolish and wicked is he! One asked this question to one about to sin: Tell me what thou thinkest, will he pardon thee or no? Whatsoever thou answer, it shall be against thyself. If thou think he will not pardon thee, what folly and desperateness is that, to offend a mighty prince without hope of pardon! If thou think he will, what ingratitude and impiety is it to offend so gracious and good a God! So when thou art about to commit any evil, or dost omit some good formerly practised, and as thou wouldst be thought to have done it of conscience, and so it may be, though now asleep; tell me, I say, what thinkest thou? Dost thou grieve and displease God, or is it liking to him? Answer what thou wilt, thou shalt not avoid, but be taken. If thou say or think it doth not displease him, thou thinkest wickedly, and shalt know it, Ps. l. 21; but if thou think it displease him, what a desperateness is this, to provoke such a great God, so mighty a prince! And though thy sins bring thee in never so much pleasure and profit for a time, never so much contentment and satisfaction, yet while God is displeased and offended, yea, grieved with it, think the end will be worse. For, 'Do they provoke me to anger,' saith God, 'and not themselves to the confusion of their faces?' As if he said, Do they imagine I will long bear my grief, and go mourning away, and not pay them home and ease myself? Yes, they shall find that I have said, Isa. i. 24, 'Therefore, saith the Lord God of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.' Therefore let men put away their iniquities, cease of sinning, and not grieve the Lord. Let no man imagine that this he will not part with, but yet do something which may please God,† as profane Esau with his father, Gen. xxviii. 8, 9: for if they do, it shall be with them as with him, though his father meant to bless him, yet God would not have it so; though men and the work* bless them, yet shall it not be so.

*Use* 3. For imitation. If God be grieved at the sins of others, then ought they to be so too. *Vide* Mal. i. 6, in properties of filial fear. And if it do grieve them indeed, then will they not use familiarity with those whose words and works are bitter and sharp swords, grieving God and grieving them. Where there is a necessity of a man's calling, there to come when he shall hear and see such thing, is one thing; but where no such things, he that can take pleasure or delight in their companies may fear he is not affected, or is benumbed by present condition, if a little pleasure or profit of his own make him endure much disgrace to God.

*When ye say, Every one that doth evil in his sight.* Their blasphemy was spoken herein, that they said God respected and loved the wicked.

*Doct.* For men to think, or speak, that God loveth and respecteth the wicked, maketh account of them, and approveth them, it is a wicked and blasphemous thought and speech against God. Such was this, and such is that, chap. iii.; such David confessed seized sometime upon himself, Ps. lxxxiii. 12, 13. This is that which Elihu chargeth Job withal: Job xxxiv. 9, 'For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should walk with God.'

*Reason* 1. Because this is to make God wicked; for no man but a wicked man, and one in that he is wicked, can, or will approve of the wicked, or wickedness. Many men may in outward show, and in hypocrisy, approve and shew liking of holiness and piety when themselves are not good; but no man can or will approve of wickedness, but he that is evil and wicked. He therefore that saith, God favoureth the wicked, must needs challenge him for wicked; but to say the righteous God is wicked, is blasphemy, &c.

*Reason* 2. Because he makes God to do that which he accounts abominable in others, and hath pronounced a woe against them that should do it, which is to justify the wicked, Isa. v. 20, he must needs think wickedly, and speak blasphemously against God.

*Quest.* How then shall we excuse the apostle from blasphemy, affirming, Rom. iv. 5 that 'God justifies the ungodly'?

*Ans.* Well enough, because the meaning is not that he justifies him so long and while he is wicked, as if he accounted evil good, and made his works just, which were wicked; for this is against the law, and forbidden by him, and affirmed by him he never will do it, Exod. xxxiv. 7. But they are called wicked, not because they are such, when he hath justified them, but because they were such before; for he pardons their sins, and heals their infirmities, and gives them new hearts, and makes them just and righteous, and so is said to justify them. It may be shadowed to our capacity. A physician is said to heal a man, not that he is sick when he hath healed him, but that he was sick when he begun with him; so in this. But that is reproved, as blasphemy in these is, that they said God loved the wicked when he was such, and approved of him, being such.

*Use* 1. To convince many of sin, and of this blasphemy, not in that only which oftentimes is heard from them, that they censure and condemn and cast out of the favour of God, and make them to be hated of God, who, indeed, are in his love and books, as if he did condemn the righteous, and only because their lives and carriage is reproved by their piety and study of holiness, and condemn them as hated, because they strive to come most nigh God. To whom we may

* Ablatus erat à peccatoribus timor, nè posset esse cautela. *And*, Tanta animorum vel potius peccatorum cæcitas fuit, ut cum ubsque dubio nullus perire vellet, nullus tamen id ageret ne periret.—*Salvian.*

† *As Cyprian de lapsis*:—Plus imò delinquit, qui secundum hominem Deum cogitans, evadere se pœnam criminis credit, si non palam crimen admisit suum. * Qu. 'world'?—ED.

apply that of Tertullian (*Apol. adversus gentes*)* How much more would Anacharsis have noted these men of folly, being unwise, yet taking upon them to censure the wise, than for men unskilful in music to censure musicians? But this is not their expressed sin here, though implied; but when they make and affirm men to be in the favour of God, and approved of him, who are wicked and evil. How many confidently glory of themselves that they love God, and are beloved of him, when some of them are like him, Deut. xxix. 18, 19, being known, and noted for wicked men, and yet boast of his love! What is this but blasphemy, to say God justifieth and approveth the wicked? But if they be not apparently wicked, but civil hypocrites, and live in no gross sin of the second table, but are void of the truth of any duty, but are without all goodness, specially in respect of the first, whereby they are wicked, (for if it be true, *satis est hoc mali, nihil boni fecisse*, then is he wicked that is not good); and for such an hypocrite to flatter himself, and boast of his love to God, and God to him, makes him so much the more wicked, for he addeth to his former sins this blasphemy, challenging God that he justifies the wicked ones, and that he approves, and likes of him, being wicked. Now, as they are guilty of this, in respect of themselves, so are they for others; for men that are their friends, by whom they reap profit, from whom they have countenance, and of whom they are honoured and advanced, be what they will be, how wicked or how ungodly soever, yet they tell them, and so flatter them, as the blessed and beloved men of God.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to take heed of this blasphemy, to think or speak thus wickedly of God, either in favour of himself or others. If a man may not lie for God's cause, he may not bely God for himself, or in the behalf of others; knowing himself guilty of some gross sins, adultery, covetousness, swearing, and such like, and lying in them, yet boast God respects and loves him, he is good in his sight. Like a bragging courtier that boasteth of the favour of his prince, when he never had it, or is clean cast out of it, for it may cost him setting on; but this surely shall. Or speaking of others for sinister respects, who, if they do but offend them, and deprive them of the hopes they have, and have settled upon them, will condemn them for most wicked men, and yet will, for the present, advance them as the only white ones of God; but it should not be thus, seeing that is to blaspheme and speak wickedly of God. And if it be dangerous slandering a state, or a just judge, saying he justifieth the wicked, how much more this? But if we must be judging, labour to judge righteous judgment, and account men beloved that are good, and them hated that are wicked.

* Quantò magis hos denotasset Anacharsis imprudentes de prudentibus judicantes, quam immusicos de musicis.—*Tertul. Apol. adversus gentes.*

*He that doth evil is good in God's sight.* So they judged from outward things, the ease, plenty, and prosperity which idolaters had, and for that accounted them happy, and beloved of God; but the prophet reproveth them, as measuring God by a false rule, themselves hated because of their long crosses, and others beloved because of their long prosperiy.

*Doct.* As they are not to be accounted hated of God, who are under the cross, and in some long affliction, so are not they to be accounted beloved, and accepted of God, who are in prosperity, and in some long outward felicity; manifest here, and that Eccles. ix. 1, Ps. lxxiii. 1, 1 Cor. i. 26.

*Reason* 1. Because these states are common to both, and if there happen to be any propriety in them, prosperity and long impunity is proper to the wicked, and the cross to godly, as all times manifest to us. And if either argue love or hatred, or do but look that ways, it is prosperity hatred, and the cross rather argue love, Rev. iii. 19.

*Reason* 2. Because God less loves where outward things are, not in particular, but generally; the reason of which is, because men else would think them beloved for their outward things, and by them to deserve love, and so never acknowledge his love free; but that he loved them, because he might better honour himself by them. As St Augustine gives the reason why he chose not the wise scribe, or philosopher, not the senator, not the rich merchant to be his disciples, because they would say they were chosen for such things; and therefore these argue rather not love.

*Use* 1. By the way, this will confute the church of Rome, making a flourishing estate a sign and true note of the church; and so of the favour and love of God, for no church without love. When it is manifest the cross is *comes ecclesiæ*, and no society hath had more afflictions than it; but if it had not, yet if it will not conclude that one man is beloved, and so two, &c., then not a multitude.

*Use* 2. This confutes the common judgment of most men, who measure the favour and love of God to themselves and others by outward things, accounting him that is in poverty and misery accursed and rejected, and he that is rich and full, to be the son of God; and hence they blaspheme God so usually as they do, both in respect of themselves and others, when they account them beloved. Their reason and ground is all upon this foundation; they have riches and wealth, and everything succeeds well with them. Like the high priests who accounted the people accursed, because they knew not the law, and themselves happy because they knew, when they knew nothing as they ought to know; as these for knowledge, so they for riches. As among the Egyptians, he only was accounted rich that had his herd full of white kine, so now he only beloved that hath his purse and treasures full. How usual this manner of judging is, is too, too apparent; but how fallacious and deceitful it is, may be as apparent,

like that of Simonides, who would have wealth better than wisdom, because the wise stood with cap in hand to the rich; so they the wealthy than the poor, because they would have it to argue more favour, and so judge a man, how wicked, at least how ungodly soever he be, if he have riches, and be in prosperity and plenty, and others hated; but these condemn the generation of God's children, as Ps. lxxiii., yea, they judge and condemn God himself, as if he loved the wicked.

*Use* 3. To teach us not to judge and measure the love of God by these outward things; to think of that James ii. 1, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, in respect of persons;' for so much it will carry, though more. We have a proverb which may confute these conceits, and better inform us; for usually we say not, he is beloved of God that is rich, but he is rich that God loves, and so he is; for he is rich that a prince loves, though he possess him not with lands and livings, because his love will ever administer that which is necessary for his place and state. But this is true, especially if we understand it of such a prince as is not mutable in his mind, not mortal in his nature; he is rich that such a prince loves, which is only God. But admit this, yet how shall a man know that God loves him, or how may a man judge who is beloved, if not by these outward things? I answer by another question: How do courtiers know princes love them, how children that their fathers love them as children? The first is not from common gifts, which are princes' largess they cast at all adventure, but their special places of honour and dignities. The second, not that they have meat and drink, apparel, and such things necessary, common to them and servants, but that they have inheritances and portions provided for them. So not these outward things common, nor common graces, knowledge, utterance, &c., but particular graces, faith, hope, sanctification, and such like. He that is rich in these, is beloved of God.

*Or, Where is the God of judgment?* Their blasphemy consisted on two parts: one, that God should favour the wicked and reprobate; another, that if that be denied, it will follow that God did not judge and govern things upon earth; for if he did, then would it not go so well with such wicked. They deny not here by this interrogation, that there is a God of judgment, but from the prosperity of the wicked, that he shews himself careless and remiss in his government, and so in this thing, calling it unto question.

*Doct.* For men to deny or doubt of the providence of God, because of the prosperity of the wicked and their impunity, and for the affliction of the godly, and their sufferings, and troubles, is a wicked and blasphemous thing; for such are these reproved. This made David pray so earnestly for God's judgments upon the wicked, that it might appear that his providence was over the earth, Ps. lviii., *per totum*, insinuating else that they would from their prosperity deny his providence. He noteth of himself, that from their prosperity he was tainted and infected with this, had not the waters of the sanctuary cured him, Ps. lxxiii. 17; and shews directly, that others seeing it, by reason of the infirmity of the flesh, and astonished at the greatness of their prosperity, and their own misery, called into question the providence and administration of God, ver. 11. Example of this is in Gideon: Judges vi. 12, 13, 'Then the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou valiant man. To whom Gideon answered, Ah my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this come upon us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, and said, Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites.'

*Reason* 1. Because they see not how they can escape the former, else to accuse God as a favourer of the wicked, and one that loves not the good, if they should acknowledge his providence, seeing they measure his love by outward things. Therefore they fall into this, to deny his providence and particular disposition of things.

*Reason* 2. Because, as St Peter speaketh, they are blind, or blinded with some passion, and cannot see afar off, either to call to mind the judgments of God, by which they may see what he hath done, that he regardeth, or to see the time to come, that he will do it; but only looking to the present view, are thus deceived and err.

*Use* 1. To teach us, when we hear many men wrangling and jangling against the providence of God, and denying his administration and government of things here below, even from this, that those who walk uprightly are under the wind, and they who contemn God, despise, or at least neglect, his worship, live in atheism, or irreligion and profaneness, yet they flourish and have all things in abundance, as heart could desire; for if he did, how would he not remedy this, and rectify this confusion? Such quarrelling as this is but the old sophistry of Satan, and the old corruption of man, which hath been a thousand times confuted in every age, and place, since it was first invented; which might have stopped the mouth of all iniquity in this case, were not Satan wonderful malicious, and the nature of man marvellous weak, not able to look to things past, or foresee things to come.

*Use* 2. To teach us to take heed of any such corruption as this is, to deny or question about the providence of God. When we look abroad, and consider things, and find things thus disposed of, which seems so contrary to the course of the world, and to stay us, we must consider two things. The first is, that howsoever other arguments and reasons of God's divine providence and mercy towards all and particular men, is to be seen and is manifest of all, both in their lives

past and present, in all places, yet are not the examples of his judgment always to be seen, but to be expected in their due time, such as are reserved for time to come; so that though a man may judge by the time past and present, and find nothing, nor no part of man's life without apparent proofs of the power, wisdom, and mercy of God, because he still makes his sun to shine and his rain to fall on good and bad, yet that part of providence which is in judgments, is to be expected in a fit time, but it is the future and time to come; and that he will manifest unto every one that he certainly doth govern. This advice is given, Ps. xxxvii. 1, 2, 9, 10, 35, 36; and that Job xxvii. from 7–14, and ver. 30. Therefore must we with David go into God's sanctuary, and consider not the beginnings nor the present state, but the ends of these men, which will manifestly prove his providence, God's dealing with them and his own; like to princes with their hawk and partridge, or their states being like the partridge, and the other as the hawk. The second is, the time present, that this diverse dealing of God with them argues his providence, because it is the way to salvation for the one, and to destruction for the other. As it argues the skill of the physician and his wisdom, having to deal with two patients, one desperately sick, and he cares not for his health, the other so sick as he may be recovered, he useth divers diets and manner of usage; so God deals with his.

## CHAPTER III.

*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall speedily come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall endure when he appeareth? for he is like purging fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit down to try and fine the silver: he shall even fine the sons of Levi, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may bring offerings unto the Lord in righteousness. Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be acceptable unto the Lord, as in old time, and in the years afore. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the soothsayers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that wrongfully keep back the hireling's wages, and vex the widow and the fatherless, and oppress the stranger, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord, I change not; and ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. From the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man spoil his gods? Yet have ye spoiled me. But ye say, Wherein have we spoiled thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have spoiled me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven unto you, and pour you out a blessing without measure. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruit of your ground, neither shall your vine be barren in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a pleasant land, saith the Lord of hosts. Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee? Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his commandment, and that we walked humbly before the Lord of hosts? Therefore we count the proud blessed; even they that work wickedness are set up; and they that tempt God, yea, they are delivered. Then spake they that feared the Lord, every one to his neighbour: and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be to me, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day that I shall do this, for a flock; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.*

VER. 1. *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall speedily come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye desire; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.*

In this chapter are two things laid down: one, an answer to the blasphemies reproved, ver. 17 of the former, which is contained in the six first verses; the other, an expostulation or contestation with them, of their profaneness, obstinacy, and other impiety, *ad finem*. For the first. The sum of it is thus. Hitherto hath God so shewed himself a most equal and upright judge, that yet before he manifested himself a most merciful father, and never yet condemned and punished any people, or any nation with destruction, banishment, or other punishment, but he first by his prophets, or by other means, endeavoured to draw them to repentance and their duty, from their madness and corruptions. And so it comes to pass, that either truly repenting and desiring the mercy of God, they obtain pardon, or remaining obstinate and impenitent, they are most justly punished. Now this ancient manner of shewing his judgments, either privately or publicly, God commands here to be expected; for he

saith he is about a most excellent work, whereby he will make manifest to godly and sound-hearted men, the greatness of his mercy, and will give proof of the severity of his judgments to the wicked, and those who are obstinate in their sin. The manner how this is expressed unto us, is, by a prophecy of two persons to come: the one of John Baptist, the forerunner, calling men to repentance, and shewing God's purpose both touching the godly and the reprobate; the other, of the ruler and Saviour of the world, the judge of quick and dead, whose admirable power is manifested both ways, both in saving of the good and faithful, and in judging and punishing the wicked. The prophecy is then of two persons, and of their duties. The first is John Baptist, the son of Zacharias, who was and did shew salvation a-coming, and teach men the means how they might obtain it; who for the similitude of his mind, manners, studies, and whole life, was called another Elias; for to understand this, as the Hebrews did, of an heavenly angel, is marvellously absurd, seeing our Saviour Christ, in the Gospel, hath manifestly affirmed that it was John, Mat. xi. 10, who was sent not by the counsel of man, neither came by his own ambition, but by the authority of God he undertook this duty.

*Behold.* Signifieth a certain and a most famous and public thing. And speaking of this he useth the present tense; he noteth the certainty of it, that it is as sure as if it were already done, and as sure as if it were beheld with their eyes. But there is in this thing a difference betwixt the prophet and the evangelist, one giving it to Christ, the other unto the Father. Divers reconcile them diversely, but that which seemeth most plain and true is this, that some works are proper to the persons, to every one in their essential proprieties; as to beget, be begotten, and proceed; and these are not communicable, but some are external and common, and sometimes are given to one person, sometimes to another, to manifest the unity of essence in the trinity of persons. As Isa. vi. 1, 'I saw the Lord sitting on a throne.' Some think, St Basil and others, that it was the Father who appeared in that vision. Yet, John xii. 41, it is given to the Son; and Acts xxviii. 25, St Paul giveth it unto the Spirit. So that which is spoken of the Holy Ghost, 2 Peter i. 21, is affirmed of the Father, Heb. i. 1. Now like to these is this. The sending of John being common to both, is by the prophet given to the Son, and by the evangelist to God, or by Christ in the evangelist, to shew that he was one in nature with the Father, and another in person. Now *angel* here is a name noting an office or ministry, and not an essence or nature (*Cyrillus*).

*He shall prepare the way before me.* The effect of his office and ministry, to make ready for Christ; that is, by preaching faith and repentance, he might fit men ready to receive Christ whom he preached, not to come, but declared and pointed at him, being present, and already come. And so he differed from all the former prophets. In which state he denied himself to be a prophet, John i.

*And the Lord whom ye seek.* The next prophecy is of Christ himself, and the Lord, whose coming and person is described in this verse; his power, verse the second; and the effects of that power in respect of the godly and elect, verses third and fourth; and of the wicked and reprobate, verses five and six.

First, Of the coming of Christ, which is described to us, first, *when* he should come, speedily or immediately; that is, when John had once entered his office and begun to preach, Christ should come preaching also repentance and the gospel. And so he did, Mark i.

Secondly, The place *where* he should come; that is, the temple. By which what should be meant, divers men have divers conceits. St Cyril understands the womb of the virgin. St Augustine and Theodoret, the humanity and flesh of Christ, because of that 'Destroy this temple,' John ii. But neither of these can be, seeing John must first be sent to preach, which was not till Christ was thirty years of age; for his sending was not his birth, but his office, or for it. So Christ's sending was not his incarnation, but his office, for then is he said to come, when he began to preach, work miracles, and execute his function; so John i. 26, 27, and Mat. iii. 11. By temple, then, we understand literally the temple at Jerusalem, and in it the church; for in it Christ ought to be, to teach, to do, and execute his calling and function by the decree of God, and there to build himself that spiritual temple which is made of living stones. And this some gather from the preposition *el*, *ad*, which signifies not only the place, but notes the cause and end as well, and so it is both *to* the temple and *for* it, noting the spiritual temple, *to* the material temple, and *for* the spiritual: that the type, this the truth.

Now the person of Christ is described. First, he is called the Lord, that is, king and governor of his church; of whom is that Ps. cx. 1. Which Lord the prophet affirmeth that they desired, the Jews, all of them. Some in one respect, and some in another desired him; some as an earthly king and deliverer, and some as a spiritual king and the true Messias, who should be their Redeemer and Saviour from sin and the wrath of God, Luke ii. 25, 38.

*Even the messenger of the covenant.* The second description of his person, that he is the messenger or angel; so called, because he was to reveal his Father's will to his people, and to be their prophet to teach them what God requireth of them. Called the angel of the covenant, partly because he was promised, and God did so covenant with them to be their prophet, Deut. xviii. 15, 16, and Rom. xv. 8; and partly, as some think, because he it is that makes the covenant betwixt God and his people, being mediator of it; and partly because he is the messenger of the new law,

or the new testament, wherein heavenly blessings are promised unto us. (So St August. *de civit. Dei.* xviii. 35.)

*Behold, he shall come.* The conclusion for confirmation of the former, to establish the certainty of it, *i. e.* at the time appointed he shall certainly come; so God hath decreed it, and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Some understand these words of his second coming, as the others of the first, as Augustine and Theodoret; but Cyril and Rupert otherwise, as we; and the third and fourth verses prove it, because those things are exercises of the church upon earth.

In the prophecy, we first observe what toucheth the forerunner: that he is sent, and the end of his sending.

*I send.* Mat. xi. 10, it is said God the Father sendeth, noting the unity of essence.

*Doct.* 1. Christ is God, equal to the Father and coeternal with him. Rev. ii. 8, 'First and last.'

*Doct.* 2. Christ he sendeth ministers, and appoints them over particular charges as pastors, Rev. ii. 1.

*My messenger or angel.* John is the messenger of Christ, one by whom he would make his will known, and the spiritual and heavenly verity manifest unto his people, which is not peculiar to John, but that which is given unto all the ministers of God, and so teacheth us a general thing.

*Doct.* The ministers of God are his messengers and angels, to receive from him, and reveal to, and teach his people his will and pleasure; those by whom he will convey unto them the knowledge of his divine mysteries: which is not to be understood exclusively, as if they should have no knowledge of it by any other means. But this is the principal means by which he hath ordained thus to manifest it; hence is this name of angel or messenger so usually given unto them; and that of ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20; and that of any interpreters, Job. xxxiii. 33; and that they bring is called the Lord's message, Haggai i. 13. Hence that, Mat. xxviii. 19, 'Go ye and teach; Luke xvi. 29, 'Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

*Reason* 1. Because of man's infirmity, therefore he speaks not himself, neither sendeth by an angel, which is one by nature, knowing the natural fear of a man, that he is able to endure neither. As that sheweth, Deut. v. 25, 26, 'Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. For what flesh was there ever that heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived.' Luke i. 11, 12, 'Then appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.' As also his superstition; who would leave attending the message, and worship the messenger, as Rev. xxii. 8. But he, willing to have the message rather regarded, sends it in earthen vessels.

*Reason* 2. Because they might know better and more fitly to deliver and apply this word, both with more compassion and with other affections, seeing they are partakers of the like infirmities, and so better know the infirmities of men. It is the reason the apostle giveth why the priesthood was taken from men, to be for men in things appertaining to God, Heb. v. 1, 2. Which is that the apostle said: 1 Cor. ix. 20, 'Unto the Jews I become as a Jew, that I may win the Jews; to them that are under the law, as though I were under the law, that I may win them that are under the law.' Which was, saith Augustine,* in compassion pitying them, not in dissimulation to deceive them. He became as a sick man himself, to tend the sick, not feigning that he had a fever, but with such a tender and condoling heart as he would be tended with if himself were sick.

*Use* 1. To confute those who think any sufficient for the ministry, to be God's messenger. *Vide* chap. ii. ver. 7, Doct. 1, Use 1.

*Use* 2. To reprove all ignorant ministers, and to admonish men to take heed how they take this calling. *Vide ibid.*, vers. 6 and 4.

*Use* 3. To confute those who think there is no necessity to hear God's ministers. *Vide ibid.*, Doct. 2, Use 1.

*Use* 4. To teach men to make conscience to hear the ministers. *Vide ibid.*

*And he shall prepare the way before me.* Here is John's office, alluding to a harbinger before a prince, whose duty it is to prepare the way for his prince, remove all lets and impediments, that he may pass more easily and more freely. So ought John, according to that Luke iii. 4, 5; and it is all one with that Luke i. 17, 'To make ready a people for the Lord,' to whom he would come. John's preaching then is the preparing of a people; and Christ comes when men have entertained that.

*Doct.* Men who would receive Christ, must entertain his word by his ministers, and be first prepared by it, and then will he come: Luke i. 76, and Rev. iii. 20, 'If any hear my voice.'

*He shall prepare the way.* John prepares the way for Christ, by preaching repentance, and bringing men to the sight and acknowledgment of their sins, which is manifest by his preaching, Mat. iii. 2, 3, 7, 8.

*Doct.* As Christ comes to none but such as have received the word; so to none, but to such who have so received it, that by it they are brought to the sight and feeling of their sins, and to see and acknowledge their fearful condition and damnable estate, by reason of their sins. Therefore it is, that one speaking of

* Compassionem isericordiæ, non simulatione fallaciæ; fit enim tanquam ægrotus qui ministrat ægroto; non cum se febrem habere mentitur, sed cum animo condolentis, quemadmodum sibi ministrari vellet, si ipse ægrotaret, et sic ipse aliis ægrotantibus ministrando compatitur.—*August. Epist. Jerome Epist.* 9.

this, of John's coming and preparing, saith it is like as when the sick is admonished of the coming of the physician, that he, knowing and feeling his disease, might reverently receive him, and submit himself to him. So in this. And to this end belongs that, Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you.' As also when he sendeth his apostles abroad: Mat. x. 6, 7, 'But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Luke i. 76, 77, 'And thou, babe, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; and to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.'

*And the Lord whom ye seek.* The second prophecy touching Christ the Lord. In this verse he prophesieth of his person and coming, and he is first called the Lord, that is, king and governor of the church.

*Doct.* Christ is the Lord and king and the governor of his church; the government of it is his, peculiar and proper.

*Whom ye seek, whom ye desire.* Christ was desired and sought for of the Jews two ways, as they were diversely affected. Some were mere natural men, they sought for him as a temporal deliverer; others had faith, and they sought for him as he was a spiritual deliverer. It is like in all circumstances; he meaneth here the faithful seeking of him, and their desire, who desired his coming.

*Doct.* The fathers in the Old Testament sought for and desired the coming of Christ. There is a double coming of his: one in the flesh, another to judgment; one in humility, another in honour; one as a servant, another as a king; to be judged and to judge; of the first and the base coming is it here spoken. This Christ sheweth in Abraham, being the father of the church, and so hath the more weight, for he desiring of it, they must needs: John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day.' And more generally, Luke x. 24, 'I tell you, many prophets and kings desired to see the things that ye see.' And chap. ii. 25, old Simeon 'waited for the consolation of Israel.'

*Reason* 1. Because they had so many promises of his coming everywhere, in the law and the prophets, which believing, they could not but expect and desire. Faith breeds hope, and hope is a patient abiding for the thing hoped for: Rom. viii. 25, 'Now that a man hopes for, that he desires.'

*Reason* 2. Because they had so many prophecies and promises of his sufferings, to free them from the wrath of God and to bring them happiness. Now that, they well knew, could not be, as he was God, which is impatible and incorruptible, therefore he must be man, which made them desire that this might be.

*Use* 1. This condemns the Anabaptists, who think the faithful people before Christ did only taste of the sweetness of God's temporal blessings, without any hope of eternal happiness; for if they had a desire and a seeking after Christ and his coming, they must needs have more than temporal things they looked after, when the prophets did so often and so fully speak of his outward baseness and sufferings. As Isaiah liii., by whom they would not look for outward things, so many as were enlightened. Like unto the Anabaptist is the Catechism of Trent, *in explicatione symboli*, making a difference betwixt church and synagogue. They say that synagogue is therefore applied to the people that were under the law, because, like brute beasts (which most properly are said to be congregated and gathered together), they respected, intended, and sought nothing, but only outward, sensible, earthly, and transitory things, who, if they sought for Christ and desired him, and waited for salvation by him, must needs wait for more.

*Use* 2. To teach us that now we have the enjoying of that they hoped for and desired, we should as much joy and rejoice in it, as they desired. It is that which Christ specially reproved in the Jews, John viii. 56, that they were so unlike Abraham, he rejoicing and desiring him being absent, but they contemned him being present, as if he expected, that if they were the children of Abraham, they should have more rejoiced in his presence and in him being come, than he could desire the day and coming. And so ought we to do, seeing Christ saith, Luke x. 23, 24, 'Blessed are the eyes which see that ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' It is that which, if we see indeed by faith, makes us happy. For though we cannot see him now bodily, or hear him personally, as they who lived in the same age, yet we may both hear and see him in the preaching of the gospel face to face, as 2 Cor. iii. 18, and so ought to rejoice in him; not as Christ saith of the Jews touching John, chap. v. 35, 'They rejoiced for a season in his light,' but more constantly; and if we have faith, so we will. St Augustine (*de doctr. Christi*, i. 38) saith: This is the difference betwixt things temporal and eternal: that which is temporal is more affected before it is enjoyed; but when we have it, we grow weary of it, because it satisfies not the soul. But that which is eternal is more loved when we once enjoy it, than while we look for it.*

*Use* 3. To teach us if they desired so greatly his first coming, we ought more his second coming, seeing that was but (as Bernard) *in infirmitate, ut justificet*, in weakness to justify us. This shall be *in gloria, ut glorificet*, in glory, to crown us. The Spirit

* Inter temporalia atque æterna hoc interest, quod temporale aliquid plus diligitur, antequam habeatur, vilescit autem cum advenerit, non enim satiat animam; æternum autem ardentius diligitur adeptum, quam desideratum.—*August de doct. Christi.* i. 38.

of God, Rev. xxii. 17, useth a borrowed speech from a virgin espoused desiring the day of marriage, that as she desireth it much more than her espousals, though that she did, so ought they; and as she desireth his person, though in infirmity and baseness, but more when he is in glory, and comes to endow her, yea, possess her of infinite riches, possessions, and glory, so it should be in a soul espoused to Christ. If they desired him as a servant, and we ought to rejoice in him while he was in the shape of a servant, how ought we to desire him as a king! If his standing at the bar where he was condemned as a malefactor, how his coming in the clouds, when he shall sit upon a glorious throne, and come in the glory of his Father!

*Shall speedily come.* The time immediately after John begun his office; and this was fulfilled, Mark i. 14, 15, which serves to the proof; as that this is the Messiah whom the prophets foretold of, so to prove the truth of the prophecies, and that the Old and New Testament answer one another, as the two cherubins looked face to face. And that as one saith, The Old was as a curtain close drawn, within which divine mysteries were hid, which in the New Testament were exposed to so open view.*

*Shall come.* The coming here is not his birth, no more than of John, nor his bodily coming, but the execution of his ministry, coming, preaching, working miracles, instituting, and celebrating sacraments, or other duties of his calling; which, though it might give us just occasion to speak of his prophetical office, which also may be observed, when he is called angel or messenger. Yet hence may we observe that the ministry is not so base a thing, as it is commonly esteemed. *Vide* Mal. ii. 4.

*Unto his temple.* They who literally understand these words, do, by them, prove Christ to be the true eternal God of Israel, one with the Father; for that temple was consecrated but to one God of Israel, and the prophet here appropriates it to Christ.

*Even the messenger of the covenant.* Christ called the messenger, because he declares unto us the will of his Father, is the prophet of the church, and to it.

*Doct.* Christ is the principal prophet of the church, to reveal his Father's will unto them, Rev. iii. 14.

*Of the covenant.* Christ is so called, because God covenanted with the fathers, or promised them he would give him them to be their prophet.

*Doct.* Christ was promised to the forefathers. God did covenant with them, to send him in the fulness of time to be their prophet and Saviour. So much is affirmed here, and is also proved by Gen. ii. 23. For so the apostle takes it to be spoken of Christ and his church, Eph. v. 30–32; also that Gen. iii. 15. Now from hence till this time it was still prophesied of the continual oracles of the prophets; as Deut. xviii. 18, Isa. ix. 6. This is that generally affirmed, Rom. i. 1, 2.

*Reason* 1. Because he loved them, therefore he promised him unto them. For there is the same reason of the promise, which is of the performance; but this came from love, John iii. 16.

*Reason* 2. Because in his love he desired to save them; and there being no other means but Christ, Acts iv. 12, he promised him, that, as we are saved by the performance and the virtue of that is past, so they might be saved by the promise and the virtue of that which was to come.

*Use* 1. To teach the excellency and worthiness of the gospel, and the mysteries of salvation by Christ, seeing it was promised so long time before by God himself, and the promise so often iterated, and repeated to the fathers. Things that princes promise, are not small or of little worth, but of great value; but that which they promise so long before, and which they so often renew to several men, must needs be great and excellent, when they are known to be princes of great magnificence and glory. So of this; and as by that God would kindle in them a marvellous desire, and an earnest desire to have it effected and accomplished, so would he in us a due estimation and love unto it being now accomplished, for being God hath provided better for us than for them, as Heb. xi. 40, we ought the more to love, believe, and esteem of it. If Moses accounted but of the sight of the promised land afar off, and rejoiced in it, they who enjoyed it were much more bound to rejoice in such a performed mercy of God. If the fathers, Heb. xi. 13, when they saw the promises but as mariners upon the sea, within the kenning of the land, and the sight of wished for cities, which they never came to, much more we who do enjoy them performed, lest, if we delight not in the knowledge, and live [not] in the faith of them, we see them not, Luke xvii. 22.

*Use* 2. If God in his love promised them Christ, and it was love that he did promise it, much more is it love he hath performed it to us, seeing that is more love which is in deed than in words. Therefore ought we, if they, to love him; and the more, nay, if they were bound in words, we in deed; and if a bare profession, acknowledgment or belief would have sufficed them, it would not us, but we must love him indeed, which is to keep his commandments, and give him obedience. And if (as Chrysostom) the Jews obeyed in the candle-light, how much more we in the sun-light! So if they for the promises, we more for the performance. If courtiers give all attendance for to rise, more when they are risen.

*Behold, he shall come.* This is to be understood of the first coming in the flesh and infirmity, not his coming in glory; and so some take this to note his coming in the flesh; so his humanity.

*Doct.* Christ came into the world and became man,

* Testamentum vetus erat veluti quædam cortina, in quâ divina misteria tegebantur, quæ fuerunt in novo Testamento reserata.

took unto him not the nature of angels, but of the seed of man, Heb. ii. 16.

*He shall come, saith the Lord.* In this coming is noted the execution of his office itself; and this, saith the prophet, the Lord said, as noting unto us that Christ did not take this office to himself, but he was sent of God, and called to it of his Father.

*Doct.* Christ did not take this calling unto him to be the angel and prophet of his church, but he was called to it, and appointed by God. So here; for seeing God saith he shall come, it argues that he sends him, and therein the promise appeareth. Hence that Deut. xviii. 18, 'I will raise them up a prophet;' Isa. lxi. 1, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and hath anointed me to preach,' &c.; John xx. 21, 'As the Father hath sent me, so send I you;' John v. 37, 'The Father himself hath sent me.'

*Reason* 1. Because it is an honour to be but God's ambassador, under Christ, and from him, more to be immediately. Now the reason for the priesthood will hold in this, Heb. v. 4: no man may take it ambitiously to himself, but he must be called and sent.

*Reason* 2. Because all might understand and know that it was God's work, and his business that he did. Therefore he sent him; he doth his work, John iv. 34, and that argues God sent him, John v. 36.

*Reason* 3. Because he only knew the will of God, and was able to manifest; therefore God sent him as the chief: John i. 18, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'

*Use* 1. This commends unto us the special love of God, and his goodness to mankind, who sent his own Son from his bosom to be our prophet, to teach us his will and the knowledge of himself, being that which could not be had any other ways, neither by any other means, and being that also which was of necessity, that there is no salvation without it, John xvii. 3. If it could have been had by any other means, or if it had not such a consequent as the salvation of man, it had nothing so appeared the goodness and love of God; but seeing neither the one could be, and the other is, it much commends and sets forth his love. And so ought we to account of it, and to rejoice much in the incarnation of Christ, by which these mercies were conveyed unto us.

*Use* 2. To teach every man to hear and receive Christ, seeing he is sent as a prophet to teach us of the Father. When I speak of hearing him, I mean the hearing of him by the means he hath appointed by his delegates and substitutes, whom he hath appointed for that purpose, his ministers. Therefore ought he to be heard, both personally, and by what means soever he hath surrogated for himself to speak in his person, seeing God hath appointed him and sent him. As Mat. xvii. 5, 'While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud shadowed them; and behold there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him.' The commandment is direct; if we make conscience of any command, we ought of this. It is not left arbitrary; and if it were, yet our own good should draw us to it; for by this we have the knowledge of God, and so of salvation: so that if there be any desire of this, we will hearken to that. But it is not arbitrary, and besides the neglect of it, is threatened with a very heavy wrath and judgment; as Acts iii. 23, 'For it shall be that every person which shall not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed out of the people.'

Verse 2. *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall endure when he appeareth? for he is like purging fire, and like fuller's soap.*

In this verse the prophet goes forward to describe Christ, and first from his power, which is set down to us two ways: one by way of interrogation, which carries with it a kind of admiration, the other by two similitudes. In some part is his power respecting the wicked, in some other respecting the godly. The first position respects the wicked.

*Who may abide the day of his coming?* That is, which of the wicked: *i. e.* the day of Christ's first coming, how tolerable, acceptable, and delightful soever it be to the godly, how weak and base soever in the outward show, with what outward weakness and infirmity soever he come, yet will it be to the wicked full of trouble, terror, and disquietness. Thus the prophets and oracles of old did foretell it should be, and this the evangelists and writers of the New Testament have shewed it to be, and that at his coming the wicked were marvellously troubled and disquieted.

*Who shall stand when he appeareth?* or, *who shall stand to behold him?* This toucheth the godly. Who can with his eyes behold such a light and such majesty? A metaphor borrowed from the sun, whose brightness the eyes of men are not able to behold; *i. e.* the glory of the Son of God shall surpass all understanding, and that goodness which he sheweth in becoming man, and conversing with them, for their conversion and salvation.

*Who shall stand?* That is, saith one, who, thinking of these things, doth not faint, as overcome with the admiration of it; so that, as a man whose legs are not able to bear, he falls down.

*For he is like a purging fire.* The first similitude, expressing the power of Christ, drawn from fire; noting out unto his how he worketh both with the godly and wicked; for as it is the nature of fire not only to separate dross from the metal, and join things which are of one nature together, so things that are good it makes more pure and perfect, but things that are impure it consumes and turns to nought. So Christ by his word destroys the wicked and unbelievers, and such as resist his will, but saves such as are chosen, making them more and more pure and perfect.

*And like fuller's soap.* Or like the fuller's herb,

an herb that fullers use, by which they purge and take out of garments blots and spots of long continuance in them, and makes them bright and pure, as it is noted Mark ix. 3, St Jerome in Jer. ii. 22. The fuller's herb, as it is commonly seen in the province of Palestine, grows in green and moist places; and to wash away spots, hath the same force that nitre hath, signifying that God makes the souls of his by his grace most pure and most holy, that their work shine forth.

*But who may abide the day of his coming?* By this some think is meant the trouble and destruction that fell upon the wicked at his nativity, because of that, Mat. ii. 3, and xxi. 10. But taking his coming to signify here his office, and the execution of it, and so the preaching of his word, as in the former verse, the meaning I will take to be this: None of the wicked shall be able to abide his preaching and ministry, but the preaching and the ministry of it is that which will cast them down and destroy them, wound them and kill them.

*Doct.* The preaching of the word by Christ and his ministers, none of the wicked are able to abide it and stand before it; but it will destroy them and cast them down, wound them to the heart, and bring them to eternal destruction; so the interrogation affirms strongly. Hence Rev. ii. 12, 'a two-edged sword given unto him.'

*Who shall endure when he appeareth?* This sentence divers of the interpreters take to be but one with the former, and the same double for the admiration of the power of Christ, in such weakness able to confound and overturn whatsoever or whosoever stands against him. But others understand it as a distinct sentence, and read it somewhat otherwise: Jerome, according to the Hebrew, *Quis stabit ad videndum eum?* The Septuagint, *Quis ferre poterit ut aspiciat eum? Simile à sole et oculis.* Who that hath but his natural and blind eyes is able to behold him, and understand the great mysteries of salvation he brings, and is hid under the veil of his humanity? As if he said, No natural man by his own understanding is able to see and conceive these things; they are hid from him, or too deep for him. That which is gathered hence is this;—

*Doct.* No natural man of himself is able to behold Christ, and to know him and the mysteries of salvation brought by him, Rev. ii. 17.

*For he is like a purging fire.* The first similitude by which he setteth forth the power of Christ, comparing him to fire; and this is to shew his dealing with the wicked, to whom he is a consuming fire, and so are they rather to be read; for neither doth the word signify purging, neither yet seems he to speak of his purging power touching the godly, for that followeth in the third verse. Therefore it is to be understood of his consuming power, by which he confounds the wicked, and destroys them. Now generally hence I observe;—

For that it is usual with the Scripture, speaking of God and his power, his justice, mercy, tender regard of his, and such like, to set them down by such things as are common and familiar, and every day or usually occurrent to the eyes and ears of men.

*And like the fuller's soap.* The second similitude to shew his dealing with the godly, his own, that he is like the fuller's soap, or the fuller's herb, which, as it hath a nature to purge and take spots out of garments, so it maketh them to have a lustre and glorious show or colour, making them fresh and white, Mark ix. 3, noting the effect of Christ in his, that he maketh them white and pure; for though it is true that this herb doth purge away blots, and so might note the purging away of corruptions from his, yet because that is the next similitude, I observe this here.

*Doct.* Christ is to his as the fuller's soap or the herb of the fuller, making them pure and holy, giving them a lustre in their lives in holiness and righteousness. And this is either perfectly, which is either in this life by imputation of his holiness, putting on his garments upon them, as Jonathan did to David after their league; or else in the life to come by full perfection inherent, when they shall be like him in holiness and glory. Or it is partially and begun in this life, whereas they are enlightened as the moon by the sun, yet have their spots, their errors; so are they sanctified, and put in a new hue, as the fuller doth a cloth or garment, yet the old threads appear in them. Of this is it here spoken, and for this is he thus called, and to this tends that 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But ye are of him in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' And chap. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Heb. ii. 11, Eph. v. 26.

Ver. 3. *And he shall sit down to try and fine the silver: he shall even fine the sons of Levi, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may bring offerings unto the Lord in righteousness.*

*And he shall sit down to try.* He shall sit down to try and fine the silver. The third similitude by which Christ is described is from the goldsmith. The sum is, that as he, sitting in his shop by his furnace, doth purge the dross and corruption from the silver, so will Christ purge corruption from those which are his.

*He shall sit.* Noting the diligence, and constancy, and care of Christ in this work; *i.e.* he shall not do it lightly or cursorily, but seriously and diligently, being marvellous attentive upon the work; for then we sit when we would do anything seriously, and with all care and endeavour. So Ps. i. 1, and l. 20.

*And fine the silver* (*Septuag. and fining as silver*), or as a man that fineth silver; for the Hebrews often omit the note of similitude; and the people, some think, is compared to silver, because they are so excellent in respect of others, which are but iron to them; some because silver hath this of its nature, that it is most mixed with other metals and minerals, and by the fire

is made most pure; so they by the virtue of Christ's death.

*And he shall purge the sons of Levi.* The parties whom he should purge, understanding not those who were such by nature, but such as were spiritual priests, such as were true and lawful priests, dedicated to the perpetual and holy service of God.

*And purify them as gold and silver.* He expresseth the same thing again and again, that it might be more certain and firm, and to shew that their purity should be very great; for these metals are of all others most accurately purged with the fire, lest any rust or dross should remain with them.

*That they may bring offerings.* Here is an effect of Christ purging of them, that their sacrifices being polluted and corrupt before, should now be pure and holy, and be made acceptable to the Lord. In these words are noted the purity of them, in the next the acceptableness of them.

*Doct.* Christ is to his as a goldsmith or gold-finer, he that purgeth and purifieth them from their dross of sin and corruption; which is, as the former, perfectly in the life to come, whenas all blots and every spot shall be removed, Eph. v. 27, or partially in this life, where as all is pardoned, so purged, but not whole sin; neither if it were can he be perfectly free, because, living in an infected air, they cannot but draw in some corruption, which, though it prevail not to death, yet it will corrupt them still, and infect them. But Christ he purgeth them, and hence is washing of us given unto him, Rev. i. 5, and cleansing, 1 John i. 7, and the baptism of Spirit and fire, Mat. iii. 11, that as fire he takes away dross and rust. Hence he is said to be 'Jesus,' Mat. i. 21, 'because he saves his people from their sins;' not *à culpa* only, and *à pœna*, but *à contagione.* Hence that Rom. vi. 3, we are partakers of his death, to make us to die to sin, and sin to die in us, Gal. vi. 14.

*Reason* 1. Because he might make way for holiness and purity, for else the new man cannot be put on, unless the old man be destroyed; men cannot be renewed in the spirit of their minds unless they cast off the old man, and he be taken from them. As the serpent cannot receive new strength unless she first put off her old skin or coat, passing and pressed by the straitness of her den or hole; so cannot we put on the new unless we put off the old (August. *de doct. Christi*, lib. ii. cap. 16). Therefore to make way for that, Christ first must purge us from sin.

*Reason* 2. Because he might make us like him. He was made like us in all things, save in sin; this makes us unlike. This then will he take and purge from us, that we might be as he, without sin.

*Reason* 3. Because we might serve him. He desires to have service from us, which cannot be unless he purge away sin and destroy it in us; for else we shall serve it, and we cannot serve two masters. Therefore he destroys this, that we might not serve it, Rom. vi. 6; and so might be free to serve him, Luke i. 74.

*To try and fine the silver.* Dross is not easily separated from metal and silver, but with the violence and heat of the fire is it tried and fined; insinuating unto us by this how hardly and with what force sin is separated from us, how close it sticks by us, and with what ado it is separated.

*Doct.* The sins and corruptions of God's children sit close to them and cleave fast, are not to be separated but with much force and violence; as dross to silver, Heb. xii. 1. To shew this belong those speeches of sacrificing, Gal. v. 24; of mortifying, Col. iii. 5; of cutting off and pulling out the right hand and right eyes, Mat. v. 29, 30: proved also by that, Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the blackmoor change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil;' and Micah vi. 7, men will give anything rather than part with sin.

*Reason* 1. Because it is natural unto them, as to others brought into the world with them. Now as the proverb, That which is bred in the bone will hardly out of the flesh, and as natural and hereditary diseases stick the fastest and most hard to be cured; so it is of sin.

*Reason* 2. Because, besides nature, custom and continuance in them is adjoined. Now, custom is another nature; and things bound with such a twofold cord, both so strong, will hardly be separated. Custom oftentimes prevails much, and *jura didicit imitari naturæ* (Saint Chrysostom). But when custom and nature are joined together, who or what shall alter them? No wonder so much preaching, and so little prevailing with men to remove their sins, and the ministry so unacceptable. Micah vi. 7 and Mal. ii. 6.

*Use.* To teach every man not to look to be separated from his dross and corruption without violence, and that he must offer violence to them to be rid of them.

*The silver.* The church and God's people thus compared, in respect of their excellency, because it and they are more excellent than any other society.

*Doct.* The church is the most excellent society in the world, Rev. ii. 1, 'Golden candlesticks.' The churches of Asia, among other reasons, were said to be golden in regard of their excellency and dignity which they have in God's account; that as gold is the most precious metal, and much accounted of men, so is the church much set by of God. It is dear unto him as the apple of his eye, Deut. xxxii. 10, Zech. ii. 8. It is a diamond among a heap of pebbles; the members of the church are jewels, as we have it afterwards, ver. 17.

Out of this place of fining and purging, some papists, catching at shadows when they have no substance, would prove and establish their purgatory, where a company of souls are holden in with paper walls and grievously tormented with painted fire; which poetical fiction and papal fancy, as we deny, so cannot this

place possibly induce us to believe it, seeing God himself hath taught us no such thing, neither in this place nor in any other. For what if St Augustine and some others have applied this place to purgatory? For he was never resolved there was such a place, but thought it credible and not impossible there might be such a place, but never once definitively determined of it (Enchir. ad Laurent, lxix.; besides Epist. 54, Maced. p. 2).* There is no other place of amendment but in this life; for after this every one shall have what he merited here. Now this place is apparently understood of purging men from the sin and corruption, and not from the punishment, and so cannot be understood of their purgatory, where only the punishment is satisfied for. Besides, the end of this purging is, that they may be fit to offer up lawful sacrifice to God, but in theirs the souls offer up no sacrifices, say no masses there. Besides, this purgation is only by Christ, through the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, being the only purgation that the Scripture acknowledgeth, and therefore this cannot be an impeachment of that. John i. 29, 'John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;' arguing a want and weakness in his payment, if after it men must pay for it. But that there can be no such thing, neither can any such thing stand with the justice of God, I prove thus: By a reason which Tertullian (*de resurrectione carnis*) and other of the fathers use to prove the resurrection of the body. For if in course of justice it be necessary that the body, which hath been partaker with the soul of all that hath been done either in righteousness or sin, be also partaker of the reward of either, and hereby there be enforced necessarily a resurrection of the body, to be joined with the soul to be partaker thereof, we must from the same principle of justice conclude that if there be a purgatory, it should be as well for the body as the soul, because the body hath been partaker of those pleasures and delights, for which they tell us that the souls pay dear in purgatory fire. But they deny any purgatory for the body, therefore they cannot truly affirm there is any for the soul. For thus shall the judgments of God be just saith Epiphanius (*in Ancorat.*), whilst both participate either punishment for sin or reward for virtue; which just judgment they greatly impeach, by laying upon the soul only the punishment of those sins which have been committed by the whole man,

*He shall even fine the sons of Levi.* The parties whom he should purge and fine, his own, called the sons of Levi, because they were and are spiritual priests.

*Doct.* All they who are Christ's are truly spiritual priests, 1 Pet. ii. 9, Rev. i. 6.

*And purify them as gold and silver.* Thus God's people and his church are compared and resembled, not to base, but to the most excellent and most precious metals.

*That they may bring offerings unto the Lord.* Here is the end why they are purged and purified by Christ, to offer up sacrifices, pure ones, and such as should be acceptable, ver. 4. Now these offerings are evangelical, not legal, their persons, prayers, praises, alms, and such like; *vide* chap. i. 11, 'offering.'

*Offerings in righteousness.* Their sacrifices shall be pure, opposite to the sacrifices of the Jews, which were corrupt and polluted.

*Doct.* The works and worship of such as are purged are pure and holy, *vide* chap. i. 11, 'A pure offering,'

*Offerings in righteousness.* Some of our papists understand this place, as that chap. i. 11, of the sacrifice of the mass, and the offering up of Christ in it.

But by these real and outward sacrifices are understood the spiritual sacrifices of the Gentiles and church under Christ.

*Doct.* Under the gospel Christians are freed from all outward and real sacrifices to be offered immediately to God, and of them are only required spiritual sacrifices, *vide* chap. i. 11.

Ver. 4. *Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be acceptable unto the Lord, as in old time and in the years afore.*

*Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be acceptable.* In this verse is noted the acceptableness of their sacrifices. The sum is, that if ever any of the sacrifices of old, offered by Abel, Abraham, and other of the patriarchs, were acceptable, then undoubtedly these; those being only the figures and shadows of the other.

*Of Judah and Jerusalem.* By these is understood the whole church wheresoever, in cities or countries; so that some particular should be figured by these, as by Judah the universal church dispersed, by Jerusalem, the metropolitan city, the apostles' see and seat, that is Rome, is boldly affirmed, but barely proved by Ribera; for why this more than Antioch, where Peter first sat; or Jerusalem itself, where James was; or Constantinople, and other cities where other of the apostles were? It is more than he can give us any reason for.

*As in old time, in the years afore.* Shewing that God is the same to his, and will receive as acceptably their sacrifices and offerings, as ever he did in former times.

*As*, in this place, hath not the force of comparison or equality, but of indication or shewing; or, as some, of correspondency of the thing figured. *Sicut* signifies *similitudinem, non æqualitatem*, as Lev. xix. 18. Some would have it to have the force, not of similitude, but certainty, that, as they were acceptable to the Lord, and Scripture, which is truth, hath said it, so as certainly shall these sacrifices be accepted.

* Morum corrigendorum nullus alius est quam in hac vita locus: nam post hanc quisque id habebit, quod in hac sibimet acquisierit.—*Epist. Maced.* liv. p. 2.

*Then.* When they are pure, and their offerings pure; not else, though they be Judah and Jerusalem, whatsoever their number, glory, and dignity is.

*Doct.* God accepts no man's prayers and service, moved by any outward things: as dignity of persons, virtue, or place, or office; nor outward privileges, if they want faith and holiness, *vide* chap. i. 9.

*Then shall they be acceptable.* When they are purged, and not before.

*Doct.* A man's prayer shall not be accepted unless he be purged and cleansed, reconciled to God, and justified and sanctified, and *è contra; vide* chap. i. 10.

*As in old time and the years afore.* Here is amplified the former, the acceptation of their offerings, either by similitude, so these; or the certainty set down, that as certainly as they were received and were acceptable, so certainly should theirs be.

*Doct.* It is as certain a truth that God will graciously and favourably accept the offerings, prayers, alms, and other the spiritual service of those under the gospel, as it is certain he did graciously accept the offerings of Abel, Abraham, Jacob, the holy patriarchs, and other of the forefathers. Now this is certain, for it is apparently set down in the Scriptures, as Gen. iv., xxii., and such; then the other, the 11th to the Hebrews proves the one, and is applied, chap. xii. 1, to prove the other manifestly unto us; for they are brought [not] only for a provocation to those duties, but as an assurance of the like acceptation. To this purpose, for prayers, is that James v. 16–18.

*Reason* 1. Because God, as he is ever one and the same in himself, so is he to all those who are his, the like affected to them; as a father loves all his children and will accept the service of one as of another, will hear the request of the youngest as the eldest.

*Reason* 2. Because they have the same thing, which made their prayers and works pleasing, and gave them boldness to the throne of grace, Heb. xi. 4, 5, which is faith.

*Reason* 3. Because they have the same Spirit helping their infirmities, Rom. viii. 26; and the same Mediator giving them favour in his eyes, boldness, and entrance, Eph. iii. 12; yea, and the Spirit in greater measure and more abundance, and the Mediator more manifested unto them.

*Use* 1. Then have we no need at all to pray and invocate the saints departed, that they would commend our prayers to God and pray for us, when we are certain our prayers may be heard as well as theirs. Upon this ground sure it was that in all the Scriptures we find not anything touching this, no succeeding ages praying to their predecessors, not Jacob and the patriarchs to Abel or Abraham, not the posterity ever to them, not the people to their prophets departed, not in the gospel ever found either precept or practice of it, nor in the primitive and first church, for divers hundred years after Christ. If Bellarmine (l. i. *de Sancto. beatit*, c. 20,) give us it for a reason why the fathers before Christ neither prayed in particular for the church upon earth, neither were prayed to, because they were absent from God, and did not enjoy his sight and presence, but were *in limbo*, and not in heaven; the same reason can we give them that for a long while after Christ there was none, because it was doubted in the church whether the faithful departed out of this world be immediately received into heaven, and enjoy the happy presence of God, or whether they remain and stay in Abraham's bosom, or some place of rest, till the day of the resurrection; yea, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others, thought that they abode in some part of hell, or in some hidden and invisible place, sequestered from the presence of God till the second coming of the Son of man; therefore must it follow that invocation is but an innovation. But to conclude: Seeing they know not our wants, nor can take notice of our prayers and hear us, neither can we have any certainty of it if it were so, and are certain, from the word of God, that our prayers shall be heard as well as theirs, we have not need to pray to them, nor reason to induce us to it; we neither in this nor any other thing adore them, but as St Augustine (*de verâ religione*, 55), we honour them for imitation, but adore them not for religion.

*Use* 2. This teacheth us the privilege those who are reconciled, justified, purged, and sanctified, have above others, because they may both have access to God and have assurance to be heard.

*Use* 3. To encourage every one that is God's to do service unto him, to bring offerings and offer up their prayers, being assured beforehand that they shall be accepted; not only heard, but graciously heard; not only received, but favourably received; therefore ought they to come with confidence and boldness unto the throne of grace. And if at any time they be fainting and doubting whether they shall be accepted or no, let them call to mind how God hath received others and their offerings, and apply this unto it, and so strengthen and encourage themselves with assurance to be graciously accepted, seeing they know God is the same now that before, he that is not only as a father, like affected to his children, but that which a father is not able to do, that to one as to another, to the youngest as to the eldest, to the children of the church of the Gentiles, as it were his second wife, as of the Jews his first wife; provided they have the same faith, the same Spirit, the same Mediator, when they come unto him, which others have had who have been graciously accepted, then shall they be certainly received. If they object that they are not so worthy as others, have not such strength of faith, such greatness of grace, and such like, I answer, first, this smells of infirmity and pride, that as they thought to be heard for their much babbling, so these for their great worthiness; and, secondly, that children who seek anything from their father, and hope to receive as

others have done, do not look upon their worthiness, but the naturalness of their father's love.

Ver. 5. *And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the soothsayers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that wrongfully keep back the hireling's wages, and vex the widow and the fatherless, and oppress the stranger, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.*

*And I will come near unto you in judgment.* The prophet having spoken of the effect of Christ's power touching the godly and faithful, and in them he speaks now of it in respect of the wicked, whom he would judge and condemn, neither should there be any evasion from his judgments, neither any way to escape them. Seeing he will be both witness and judge, from whose knowledge, and power, and uprightness, they cannot exempt themselves. And this is contained in the fifth and sixth verses, and hath two general parts; the first is the judgment, the second is the certainty of it from the immutability of God.

*And I will come near unto you in judgment, i.e.* you do much detract from me and disgrace me, as if I regarded not what things were done here below, but only beheld them afar off, and let things run as they would; but now I will come near unto you, and seeing you say, 'Where is the God of judgment,' I will come to you not as you would, to revenge others for your sake, but to exercise severe judgment against you. And so he speaks here of a perfect and sensible judgment, which they had thought and judged to be far off.

*And I will be a swift witness.* Another effect, *i.e.* I who am the judge, will also be a swift witness. I will come speedily, and speedily will I lay open all your sins, for all your windings and turnings, all your secret concealing of sins is known to me. You think that I am slow in executing of judgment, but I will come sooner than you think of, or will be profitable for you, for to your destruction I will be swiftly present. And all your hypocrisy shall not help you, for I will find out these sins which you cover by fraud and cunning, and cloak under one thing or another, and cover by some colours. He noteth such sins as were wont to be done in secret, and for which it was hard to find witnesses to evict them and punish them. There shall want no witnesses for these things to prove them, though you do it in great secret: I will be the witness of it; and for these he numbers up certain particular sins, such as were done in secret without witnesses. The first he calleth soothsayers; some think the word signifies such as we usually call jugglers, such as make things seem otherwise to the eye than they are. And under this he comprehends all who use any enchantments or magic, and have society with devils; the other particulars see in their places as they follow.

*I will come near to judgment.* They, because of the long patience of God, put far from them both him and the day of judgment, and thought no evil should come unto them; but he threateneth them for the abuse of his patience, that he would certainly visit and judge them. The Lord properly cannot be said to be far off, seeing *ubique totum est*, and so neither to come near properly, but he is said to come, *cum manifestatur*, and to depart, *cum occultatur*, but ever present, either hid or manifest (August.). Now, when he manifesteth himself either in mercy or judgment, he is said to come near, as in this place.

*Doct.* Howsoever the Lord spare long, yet will he visit in the end those who abuse his patience, Jer. vi. 6.

*And I will be a swift witness against the soothsayers.* Another effect, as some would have it, or the manner of his proceeding, first, swiftly, then by way of witness, and evict them before he condemn them. His swiftness is not simply, for he is slow to wrath, but in respect of them, who thought judgment far off, and promised themselves safety, as before, he would come upon them swiftly, unlooked for.

*Doct.* The judgments of God come upon the wicked when they least think of them, and promise to themselves all security, and think they are furthest, by reason of God's patience. Then will he come to judgment sooner than they thought of, Micah i. 3; 'for behold the Lord cometh.'

*A witness.* If he will be a witness, then a true witness, and so knoweth all they do, their wickedness, else should he not be a true witness.

*Doct.* The Lord he knows all the ways of the wicked, as an eye-witness of them all, sees and beholds whatsoever they do, and wheresoever, Micah i. 3.

*Use* 1. To admonish men to take heed what they do, and to look to their carriage.

*Use* 2. To teach them when they have sinned, that it is in vain to go about to cover it, or to imagine they can by any means avoid punishment for it, seeing he that is the judge knoweth it, and a most righteous judge; who, as he will reward the godly for their good, so will he recompense the wicked for their evil. And as neither the malice of wicked men, who disgrace their good things, calling good evil, nor their own modesty, ready to deny or lessen their good, as Mat. xxv., can hinder them from their reward, or keep good things from them, either present or future, and all because he knows them, and is merciful and just; so neither the corruptions of others like themselves, approving and applauding their evil, nor their own cunning either in staying the passage of man's judgments against them, or in smothering human testimonies and evidences, by which they should be cast, shall defend them from their just recompence, and keep evil things from them, both present and future; and all because he knows them, and is most just. In vain is it then for them to take this course. As it is a marvellous, vain, and bootless thing for a malefactor to endeavour to get his examination taken by a justice, out of the court from the clerk of assize, or to bribe and stop

the mouths of those who should give evidence against him, to inform the judge and the jury, when the judge himself was a witness of the fact, and is ready both to inform the jury, and to give sentence according to his own knowledge.

*A witness; i. e.* as a guilty person is condemned by testimony of witness, the crime proved and manifest, so will I give sentence against the wicked, of those things which I know they have done.

*Doct.* The Lord proceeds not to judgment, to condemn or punish any, but upon known and manifest causes, upon the known deserts and merits of men, sometimes secret to others, sometimes known to them. This is proved, Num. xx. 12; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. Infinite are the examples of known sinners, as the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, Nadab and Abihu, Korah and Dathan, &c., Mat. xxv.

*Reason* 1. Because he is most just, and therefore must proceed upon known cause; for it is as well injustice to punish for an unknown cause upon jealousy and suspicion, as for no cause; for an unknown cause is no cause. *De non existentibus et non apparentibus eadem ratio.*

*Reason* 2. Because he would manifest his justice to men, therefore he usually proceedeth upon known causes to them, as sometime upon known causes known to them [sometimes], only known to himself to manifest he is not bound to give a reason of his judgments to men.

*Use* 1. If we see one afflicted, punished, we accounted upright, to know God's proceedings are upright and upon known cause. And hence may we learn how to free ourselves from such doubts, when we see what befell Korah, and all their company, Achan and his, when some sinned only in the known sin, yet others were punished. We must conclude that it is most just, from this ground, that he proceeds never but justly, though it be secret from us.

*Use* 2. For imitation, first for the magistrates, gods upon the earth, they ought not to proceed against malefactors, but upon known and manifest proved causes, not upon slender conjectures or suspicions, for so will God himself do; and they executing his judgment, ought to proceed no otherwise, lest they fall into injustice. They ought not to proceed for any hatred to their person or their profession, or for any other sinister respect, upon accusations half had, and slender or no proofs. The lawyers say that it is unjust not to weigh and consider the whole law, but to give sentence from some part of it. If the laws condemn truth unheard, besides the note of injustice, they will cause a suspicion that they are conscious of some unwillingness to hear, lest after they had heard, they could not condemn; as Tertullian speaks;* so of magistrates. Therefore in things not manifest, not proved, or by such witness whose persons are infamous, their credit suspicious, such as may be suborned, or do things of spleen and malice, which may haply appear to them, they ought to take heed how they judge, and as they have power, rather reprove than condemn.

Again, in the second place, every man ought to judge righteous judgment, when he judgeth and censureth the actions of other men; but *secundum allegata et probata*, not out of his own humour, out of the dislike of their person, justifying some because they have affection to them, condemning others and their actions because they dislike them, or condemning some men's doings, only for the name they have. Like unto those who being sick of a fever or frenzy, being deceived by the similitude of right lines drawn upon the wall, thought they saw some deformed and ill shaped creatures (*ut Aristot.*). So they out of sick, diseased, and corrupt minds, do not only deprave the right lines, that is, the famous and good actions of others, but account them as vices, and turn them to their reproaches and infamy. If that for men's words be true which Luther used to say, It is a wicked practice, when you know a man's mind and meaning to be good and sound, yet to catch at his words (it may be not so fitly delivered) to accuse him of error;* so for men's actions, out of some infirmities, or upon some suspicions, when they know nothing but good in them, and yet believe every report against them. As Tertullian said it was with him and other Christians in his time; *Credunt de nobis quæ non probentur, et nolunt inquirere ne probentur non esse.* They believe things of us without trial or proof, and will not examine whether they be so, lest they should be proved to be otherwise.

*Against the soothsayers.* He numbers up the particular offenders he would deal with, not that he would deal with men,† no, but alleging these as a taste of others, or as the sins which then ruled and reigned amongst them; but we may observe that here are numbered not sins of one kind, not against the second table only, or first only, but against both.

*Doct.* The Lord will judge, punish, and destroy men for irreligion as well as dishonesty; for the neglect or the breach of the first table as well as the second, and *è contra*, and for both, manifested here, for they are joined together, as it were, in one condemnation; proved further from the threatenings and executions laid down in the word, where we shall find the idolater, the Sabbath-breaker, the swearer, &c., threatened and punished as well as the adulterer, murderer, and other dishonest and unjust persons. In Deut. xxviii. all the curses repeated respect the whole law, and all the commandments, as well as any one, or of either of the tables, Ezek. xxii. 6–8, Hosea iv. 1, 2, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 1 Tim. i. 9, 10, Gal. v. 19–21, Rev. xxi. 8.

* Veritatem inauditam si damnent leges, præter invidiam iniquitatis, etiam suspicionem merebuntur alicujus conscientiæ, nolentes audire, quod auditum damnare non possunt.—*Tertull. Apolog. adversus gentes, cap.* i. 10.

* Sceleratum est, cum noveris esse pium et sanum alicujus sensum, ex verbis incommode dictis statuere errorem.—*Luther.*

† Qu. 'them alone'?—ED.

Everywhere offenders against both tables are joined together.

*Reason* 1. Because, as James ii. 11, 'He that said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill; now though thou doest none adultery, yet if thou killest, thou art a transgressor of the law.' So he that commanded obedience to the one, and forbade disobedience, did so to the other; and so he is disobeyed and provoked in the one as well as the other.

*Reason* 2. Because the curse was not an appendant to one table, but to both, and every precept, and every branch of every precept, Deut. xxvii. 26.

*Use* 1. Then, under the gospel, there is use of the law moral; for this is spoken of Christ, which thing would he not, neither could he in justice do, if the law were not to them under the gospel.

*Use* 2. This may teach many in the church to expect Christ a terrible judge and swift witness against them; seeing if they seem to make care of the one, they have none of the other, for many seem marvelous careful of the first table and matter of religion. They will hear the word, they will be frequent in prayer, they will not swear an oath, keep the Lord's day, hate idolatry, and such like; but yet live in some breach of the second table, in hatred and malice, lust or covetousness, cruelty or oppression, slandering and discontentment, disobedience and disloyalty; and these are religious hypocrites. On the other side, many there are who have care to deal justly, to perform faithfulness to men, are merciful, liberal, loving, and kind, &c., yet care not, or regard not the duties of religion; are swearers, profaners of the Lord's day, neglecters of the worship of God, careless, negligent, drowsy hearers and prayers, and have little hatred of idolatry, and less love of the truth; and these are civil hypocrites. Both these, in the hypocrisy of their hearts, persuade themselves that they are in the favour of God, and shall escape the wrath of Christ, when he shall come to judge, either in this life or the life to come. And these, and none more, lie censuring, judging, and condemning one another, and remember not that the Judge standeth at the door, ready to judge, and condemn them both. Seeing he commandeth both, he will condemn for the neglect of either; and the curse is to him that neglects religion and the first table, as well as the second and honesty.

*Use* 3. To persuade these hypocrites to come out of their hypocrisy, and both them and all others to take upon them the care of performing obedience to Christ in both. Be careful of religion with honesty, and of honesty with religion. This must be done, and the other must * be left undone. Hast thou any knowledge of God, any love of the truth, any care of the Lord's day, any fear of his great name, any love to hear or to pray? See thou be careful of justice, chastity, sobriety, obedience, fidelity, and true love to men; or else for all that, when thou thinkest to have Christ for thy Saviour, thou shalt find him but a swift witness and an ireful judge against thee. So on the contrary. Many will easily grant me, that if a man be never so religious, so devout, and careful of the first table, yet if he be unjust, an extortioner, a murderer, and such like, as they, Acts xxviii. 5, judged of St Paul, so the Lord will not suffer him to live, but his judgments shall be upon him, and condemnation in the life to come. But if a man be just, chaste, merciful, and such like, though he know not religion, be without the fear of God and care of his service, though a swearer and blasphemer, a profaner of the Lord's day, yet he may do well enough, and no fear of perishing or judgment; and so will they speak, both in life and death, which is all one, as if they should think a man which is guilty of felony, murder, and such like, must needs be judged by the law of the land; but if not of these, though he be a traitor to the king's person, yet is there no fear. But if a traitor shall die, though not guilty of felony, and a felon, though not culpable of treason by the justice of man's law, much more they who shall separate these two tables. Therefore must we endeavour to be religiously honest, and honestly religious, to avoid the transgressions of both tables, and to do the duties of them, lest, if we separate these, we lay ourselves open to the judgments of God in this life, and separate ourselves from the comfortable and happy presence of the Lamb, and him that sitteth upon the throne.

*Against the soothsayers.* The first particular whom he will judge, and under this all of the like kind; such, Deut. xviii. 10, 11, 'Let none be found among you that maketh his son or daughter go through the fire, or that useth witchcraft, or a regarder of times, or a marker of the flying of fowls, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or that counselleth with spirits, or a soothsayer, or that asketh counsel at the dead.'

*Doct.* The Lord, as he will judge and destroy all other malefactors, so will he soothsayers, witches, enchanters, sorcerers, necromancers, wizards, and all such like. So is affirmed here. And if we look to the Old Testament, and things that are past, we shall find it true: Deut. xviii. 12, 'For all that do such things are an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth cast them out before thee.' 2 Kings xvii. 17, 18, 'And they made their sons and their daughters pass through the fire, and used witchcraft, and enchantments, yea, sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord to anger him; therefore the Lord was exceeding wroth with Israel, and put them out of his sight, and none was left but the tribe of Judah only.' Mic. v. 12, 'And will cut off thine enchanters out of thine hand, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers.' In the New, Gal. v. 20, 21, Rev. xxi. 8, 'Sorcerers shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.'

*Reason* 1. Because they are gross idolaters, and the

* Qu. 'must not?'—ED.

art they use is gross idolatry; for here is ever either the express invocating and calling upon the devil, and seeking from him knowledge of things secret and to come, help in trouble, deliverance from danger, and such like, proper unto God, or else some secret and covert invocation on him: as under the name of the dead, or under some barbarous terms, which have no signification; or by some superstitions and arts of sleight, invented by him, which Tertullian (*lib. de anima*) calleth second idolatry. For as in the first he feigned himself to be a god, so here an angel, or one that is dead, and such like, and in both he seeks to be worshipped. Whenas then they are worshippers of the devil, taking from the Lord that was his, most grateful and acceptable to him, invocation and his worship, and giving it to his most deadly and greatest enemy; how should he put it up, and not be revenged of such a generation?

*Reason* 2. Because they bewitch and deceive many, and draw them into the same sins, and so bring them to destruction, as is said of Simon Magus, Acts viii. 9. Whenas therefore they so strive against the glory of God, and salvation of others, no marvel if the Lord will judge and destroy them.

*Use* 1. To stir up the magistrate to draw forth the sword of justice against these, and to cut off all such workers of iniquity from the city of God; for they ought to do as the Lord would, and will do, seeing they have the commandment for it, Exod. xxii. 18, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;' Levit. xx. 27, 'And if a man or woman have a spirit of divination or soothsaying in them, they shall die the death; they shall stone them to death, their blood shall be upon them.' So did Saul while he was assisted of the Lord, and Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 24. And this as well such as hurt as help; and though they do neither, yet if they have familiarity with a spirit, as both the law of God and our land requires. And slender it is which is objected, to say now there are none, when this place speaketh of the time of the gospel; and never would the apostle have threatened any, if there had not been such sins, and such offenders, to have thus fought with a shadow.

*Use* 2. To persuade men to avoid this sin, and not to fall into it, to become soothsayers, wizards, wise men, &c., upon hope of gain, for desire of revenge, affecting vain glory, to know and reveal things to come, or for any such cause, knowing that though they can escape the law and punishment of man, either hurting not or covering their sorcery and witchcraft by medicines and herbs, or deny they consult with any spirit; yet shall they not the judgment of Christ, who is the witness, and sees the secret of their compact with Satan, beholds their invocation and worshipping of him, either in secret place or in secret manner, and howsoever it is, and will judge them, and doth judge them in this life with blindness, hardness of heart, oftentimes poverty, and such like; but sure he shall judge them in the life to come, and give them their portion with him who have sought to better their portion by him.

*Use* 3. To dissuade men from seeking to soothsayers and sorcerers, &c., or having any commerce or fellowship with them in their art, to seek from them the knowledge of things to come, the finding of things lost, the helping of creatures ill-affected, and such like; for besides that it is absolutely forbidden in the word of God, and threatened, Lev. xx. 6, manifested in the example of Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii.; this may dissuade, because they shall be partakers of their sin, and consequently of their punishment, and be judged by Christ; for judging these, he will judge them who communicate with them in the same sin. Yet is it lamentable and fearful to see what flocking there is of men, but more of women, to men and women who cannot choose but be witches, and have familiarity or commerce openly or closely with the devil, sometimes for things lost, sometimes for barrenness, sometimes for long and extreme diseases of their children; not fearing this, that Christ will judge them, then those who communicate with them, and are the causes of their practices: for as no receivers, no thieves, so no frequenter to those, no such, specially such as are called white and good witches or sorcerers.

*Obj.* But they will say they are bewitched; *Ergò*, they may seek to be helped.

*Ans.* 'As if there were not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Beelzebub the God of Ekron,' 2 Kings i. 3; or that God were not able to dissolve the works of the devil. Did Job this, when no doubt he discerned, as well as these, that he was bewitched?

*Obj.* But ease and deliverance often followeth after this. In possessions, devils depart; in other extremities, things are appeased.

*Ans.* This is nothing; for, *first*, devils know how to agree among themselves to deceive men, and none of us would trust or commit his business to one that is deceitful and perfidious. Now the devil is not only a liar, but the father of a lie. *Secondly*, If health and ease follow, it may be it is the effect of the lawful means which was used before; and God, seeing how corrupt and impatient thy heart was to abide his leisure, and make use of them, gave thee over to thy corruption, and let thee have thine own will, even then to use such an unlawful means, when health and ease was at hand, as if it had been an effect of that, to confirm thee in thy blindness and infidelity. Or, *lastly*, it may be like that Deut. xiii. 3, 'Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.' And therefore for thee to take heed how thou hearkenest to these, lest thou bewray thou lovest not the Lord.

*Obj.* But they use nothing but good words and lawful means, prayers, and herbs, and simples, and such like.

*Ans.* I answer first with St Chrysostom, she is a Christian woman that useth the spell, and nothing but the name of Christ.* They spake these words before going, when they excused themselves for the like. He answereth, For that cause hate and detest her the more, because she vilely abuses the name of God. Professing herself a Christian, she doth the works of an heathen; for so the devils confess the name of God and yet were devils still.† For they said, Luke iv. 41, 'Thou art Christ the Son of God,' yet he rebuked them and cast them out. Therefore I would entreat you to beware of this deceit, for as they who are tempering bitter cups for children first rub the mouth with honey, that that heedless age, when it shall perceive sweetness, shall not feel and fear the bitterness; and they who give poisonful herbs give them the titles of medicines, that no man then reading the superscription of a remedy should suspect poison; so deal these. Besides, in their herbs, the devil is but God's ape, who, seeing him not do things but by means, useth the like, that no man might suspect him, as he appeared in like habit to Samuel. But to conculde, what colour and covert soever is made, Christ is the witness, and knows all; and he will be the judge, to reward all who shall thus pollute and defile themselves.

*And against the adulterers.* The second particular. Adultery, in the etymology of it, is a going up to another man's bed. As Gen. xlix. 4, 'Thou wast light as water; thou shalt not be excellent, because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then didst thou defile my bed, thy dignity is gone.' In the nature of it, it is the carnal knowledge of a woman who is bound to another man; but no doubt in this place, not only this, but under it, fornication and wantonness, and all uncleanness, is contained, as in the commandment.

*Doct.* The Lord, as he will judge, condemn, and destroy all wicked men, so adulterers, whoremongers, fornicators, buggerers, and other unclean persons; here, and Gal. v. 19, 21, Eph. v. 5; Heb. xiii. 4, 'Marriage is honourable among all men, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' Rev. xxi. 8.

*Use.* This ought to make every one fly adultery, though he can escape the punishment of men, yet for God's judgment, in this life often wasting of the body, and fearful diseases, poverty, reproach, and ignominy, such as shall never be put out, that fearful judgment Job speaks of, chap. xxxi. 9, 10. But if these be not feared because they befall in a few (and yet may he be of the few), yet this should, Eccles. xi. 9, that Christ will judge him and condemn him, exclude him heaven, cast him into hell, and the fire that burns for ever.

* Christiana mulier est hæc excantans, et nihil aliud loquitur quam Christi nomen.—*Chrysostom, hom.* 21, *ad popul. Antioch.*

† Propterea namque magis odi et aversare, quod Dei nomine ad contumeliam utitur; quod se dicens esse Christianam, gentilium opera facit. Etenim et Dæmones Dei nomen fatebantur, et tamen erant Dæmones.—*Chrysostom.*

*And against false swearers.* The third particular, which is not set down barely as the others, but with this addition of falsely or vainly. The reason is, because to swear is not simply unlawful as the other, but a thing that a man is oftentimes bound to for the glory of God, and for the profit and necessity of others; so it be by the Lord alone, and taken in truth, not swearing a lie and false thing, in judgment advisedly, and upon necessary occasion in righteousness, promising by oath nothing but that is lawful and just, and undertaken for the glory of God, the discharge of duty, the appeasing of controversy, the satisfying of others, and the clearing of a man's innocency; but these and their like being wanting, it is a false oath, and men swear falsely.

*Doct.* The Lord he will judge and condemn all false swearers, such as swear by others than himself, false things not in truth, rashly not in judgment, unlawful things not in righteousness, neither respecting God's glory, the good of others, discharge of duty, &c. So here, and Exod. xx. 7, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain:' not guiltless, but under that bitter curse of condemnation, Deut. xxvii. 26, Zech. v. 2–4; James v. 12, 'But before all things, my brethren, swear not: neither by heaven nor by earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.'

*Reason* 1. Because he hates such oaths. Zech. viii. 17, 'And let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his neighbour, and love no false oath, for of all these are the things that I hate, saith the Lord.' Now hating these, he must needs for them hate those that love and practise them; and hatred will procure judgment, wrath, and destruction.

*Reason* 2. Because swearing by others they are idolaters; for whereas an oath is not only God's ordinance, but a special part of his worship, both because there is invocation, and because it is in the first table commanded, and of the solemn form of imposing an oath, which was this, 'Give glory to God,' Josh vii. 19. And the solemn rite of taking an oath among the Jews, which was to stand before the altar, 1 Kings viii. 31, and was a custom among the Athenians and Romans. Then to give God's worship to another is idolatry, and idolaters must be judged and condemned.

*Reason* 3. Because, if rashly by him, the name of God, so dear unto him, he dishonouring and vilifying it by such usual and rash swearing, he will revenge it. If seriously, and yet not in truth, for things past or to come, knowing them to be false, and intending not to do them, he calls God as a witness of his falsehood, and a revenger of it, and so must he come upon him; for this he tempteth God desperately, and dareth him, as it were, to his face, to execute his vengeance upon him.

*Use* 1. This may shew us the fearful estate not of a

few, but of a multitude, and whole troops of men and women, being common and usual false swearers, who can neither buy nor sell, meet nor depart, neither speak seriously nor in jest, neither persuade nor promise, neither entreat nor threaten, neither relate things past, nor draw men to the expectation of things to come, without swearing and many oaths, oftentimes by those which are no gods, committing idolatry usually, rashly, and unadvisedly, and not seldom wickedly, falsely, and deceitfully. In this sin are wrapped both parents and children, masters and servants, rich and poor, high and low, noble and base, minister and people. If the Lord, that threateneth to be a swift witness against such, and a severe judge, should now come to destroy and cast to hell all such, how fearful then would we think and account their condition to be! Verily, how nigh that day of assize and of his glorious appearing is nobody can tell; few suspect it to be so nigh as it is; but say it be as far off as they suppose, yet doth he judge them every day. It is a judgment, and a fearful one, that they sin every day, and swear every hour, and see it not, to leave and forsake it; but the morning swearing is punished with the afternoon, this day with to-morrow, &c. And for all these, the plague of God and his judgments ready to break in at the doors, though he see it not, yet others may see it manifestly. Tell me what wouldst thou think his state and condition to be, that had a ball of fire hanging over his house, ready to fall upon him to consume him, his wife and children, servants, and all that he hath in a moment, and yet he and they all within doors give themselves to chamberings and wantonness, to drunkenness and gluttony, to whoredom and uncleanness, by that means to draw and hasten this to fall upon him and consume him; wouldst thou not think him in a fearful condition? Such is the state of every swearer; the plague of God tends upon their house, the volume of curses is hovering and flying about their houses, and this fire hanging over them, and still by their oaths, as the falconer by his lure and hallow, calling this to fall upon him; and their case the more fearful, because custom hath made them, when they swear, they deny they did; and if they be evicted for it, they account it as nothing, no more than an ordinary speech. As Saint Chrysostom (*hom. ad Baptiz.*), *Si quis jurantem increparverit, risus movet, jocos narrare putatur.* But the same day, or the day after that Lot's sons-in-law mocked and despised their father's admonitions, the fire of God devoured them and their city, Gen. xix. So may it upon them. Pity then their fearful conditions, and fear and fly their society, their fellowship, their families; for though thou hast escaped hitherto, yet when the flying book enters in at their doors and windows, thou mayest haply be there then, and partake in their plague. But in truth thou hast not escaped; but as they, by the custom of their own sin, are grown senseless, so thou by theirs art grown less to fear an oath than thou didst before, and so hast got more hurt to thy soul, than ever they shall be able to do thee good to thy body and state, howsoever thou promise thyself great things by them.

*Use* 2. This may serve for secure men, who lie in this sin, to hate swearing, or are ready to fall into it, to persuade them, as Zech. viii. 17, 'And let none of you imagine evil in his heart against his neighbour, and love no false oath, for all these are the things that I hate, saith the Lord.' If not for the heinousness of the sin, yet for the punishment. If not in a state where there is little law against it, yet in a church where the King of it is both a swift witness and a severe judge, and will both judge and condemn every false swearer. St Chrysostom, dissuading from this sin, and persuading little, at length breaks forth into this: I would I might uncover and lay open the souls of ordinary swearers naked, and set their wounds and scars before their eyes, which they daily receive by oaths; then there would be no need of admonition or counsel, because the sight of their wounds would more prevail than all my words.* This would I wish, to give them the sight of their sin, and the guilt of it; but if it prevail not, I would I could give them the sense of it, that I could make them see and believe the judgments and punishments which belong to it, that the flying book full of curses is long since come abroad, and is ready to seize upon their houses and persons; that Christ will certainly, as he heareth every oath, so judge them for it, and lay heavy plagues upon them. Methinks this should be like the ship-master's voice, Jonah i. 6, 'What meanest thou,' O swearer? 'call upon God, that thou perish not.' And so to be careful to avoid them themselves, to reform them in theirs; not swearing for gain, less for pleasure or vanity; not for courtesy, as in sitting down and taking places; not in passion, and such like, but remembering the law, thinking of the judgment, not forgetting the judge, and so not alleging excuses: James v. 12, 'But before all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.'

*And against those who wrongfully keep back the hireling's wages.* The fourth particular is oppression, and the particulars of this are several; this the first, that when a man hath hired and used another, and had his labour and sweat, whether he were hired by day, week, or year, whether by day or by whole, if they retain their wages from them unjustly, deny it them directly, or under some colour, or diminish it, or defer it, which is an injury unto them, he will judge them.

*Doct.* The Lord he will judge, and condemn, and

* Utinam mihi liceret frequenter jurantium animas exuere, et ipsorum oculis subjicere vulnera et cicatrices, quas quotidie capiunt à juramentis; nec admonitionis, nec consilii indigeremus, quoniam vulnerum aspectus omni sermone potentius.—*Hom.* 14, *ad pop. Antioch.*

destroy all such as keep back their hireling's wages, which for his living worketh with him, either by day, month, or year; and such are here threatened. Like to this that Jer. xxii. 13, 'Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers without equity; he useth his neighbour without wages, and giveth him not for his work;' James v. 4, 'Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts.'

*Reason* 1. Because they transgress the law of justice, which requires they should give to every man his own, and not withhold the right from the owner of it; but they having had their labour, their wages is then the other's right and due; so that to withhold it is injustice; but all unjust men he will judge and destroy.

*Reason* 2. Because they are cruel and unmerciful; for a merciful man will not defraud his beast, but gives him his due when he laboureth for him, regarding that, Deut. xxv. 4, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' God speaks not for oxen, but for men, and if mercy be not shewed here, then, James ii. 13, 'There shall be judgment merciless to him that sheweth no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.'

*Use* 1. Then are there many in this city, many (I fear, nay, it is without fear) hearers of the word, whom the Lord will judge; because they keep back the hire of the labourer, and are the labourers' purse-bearers and cofferers whether they will or no: verily Christ shall judge them for it, will they, nill they.

*Use* 2. To teach those who have servants, or use hirelings, to take the apostle's rule, Col. iv. 1. Do not detain and defraud them of their wages; it is equal, it is right you should give it them: know you, else you have a Master in heaven, give it them cheerfully, fully, readily, not fraudulently, else this Master shall be your judge, and he is the witness of all your fraud. If you have done it, do it no more; and for that is done make them restitution; search your books, and see wherein you have defrauded them: Deut. xxiv. 14, 15, 'Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is needy and poor, neither of thy brethren, nor of the stranger that is in the land within thy gates: thou shalt give him his hire for his day, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and therewith sustaineth his life: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.'

*And vex the widows.* The second particular of the fourth kind of sinners, whom the Lord will judge: namely, such as vex, injure, and oppress widows; howsoever, this with those which follow, are usually joined together in the Scripture, yet because he that doth any one of these, though he do them not all, shall be judged of Christ, I will speak of them briefly and severally.

*Doct.* The Lord he will come near to judgment, to punishment, and destruction against all those who vex, oppress, and injure the widows. So is it here. And that Exod. xxii. 22–24, 'Ye shall not trouble any widow, nor fatherless child. If thou vex or trouble such, and so he call and cry unto me, I will surely hear his cry; then shall my wrath be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.' Deut. xxvii. 19, 'Cursed be he that hindereth the right of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. And all the people shall say, So be it.' Jer. xxii. 3, 5, Mat. xxiii. 14, 'Woe be unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, even under colour of long prayers: wherefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.'

The sin is made the greater because it is coloured, and the punishment threatened to be heavier; but a woe is denounced against them because of the simple sin.

*Reason* 1. Because they are guilty, not only of injustice, but cruelty; of cruel injustice: for to injure and vex any, is injustice; but to vex widows, and such as are weak and helpless, is cruelty: and then, James ii. 13, 'There shall be judgment merciless to him that sheweth no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.'

*Reason* 2. Because God he professeth himself the helper of the helpless, and the patron of such as are without succour and friends; therefore, as he must right their wrongs, so must he relieve them oppressed, and revenge their oppressions.

*Use* 1. This may admonish those who are in authority and place of justice, to defend the widows' cause when it comes before them, or what power soever they have in their hands: as Isa. i. 17, 'Plead for the widow,' whether she be rich or poor; for if rich, it is but justice; but if poor, it is both justice and mercy. That many will do, and it is less thankworthy, because they are able to recompense them by some gratefulness and other means; in whom there is a show of justice, but no justice indeed, and in truth but a desire of gain. The other is the harder, and as just, so merciful, and hath the promise of good from God: as in the general, Luke xiv. 14, 'And thou shalt be blessed, because they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' Those shall be recompensed of men, these of God. This they ought then to do cheerfully, and not as the unrighteous judge, unwillingly, but as Job xxxi. 16, who would not suffer the eyes of the widow to fail.

*Use* 2. Then may all those who are vexers, oppressers, and injurers of widows know what they are to look for from the Lord; that howsoever they think all safe, and he is far off, yet he will come nigh to them to judgment, and be swift when they think he is slack, either to make their houses destitute, or their wives widows, or to bring some such fearful judgment against them, besides the after claps, that which is to

come after this life. But who are these, that some men may see themselves touched? Verily, there are divers sorts of them; some injure rich widows, who, left by their husbands, under whose shadow they prospered well, are, by unjust executors, long kept without their portions and widow's part, and never recover it but by long suit in law, where the best part is spent before the other is recovered. If they have it without any such troubles, then are they by unconscionable kindred bought and sold by a piece of money to a man that hath neither wealth, virtue, nor grace. Many a man labouring for her, making great show of wealth, which in truth many pounds is worse than nothing: for poor widows, utterly forsaken of all kindred and friends on both sides, never deserving the commendations given by Boaz, Ruth ii. 20, for they soon cease to do good, both to the living and dead. And doing thus to kindred, what can be expected of those who are not allied to them, but that they should leave them destitute, and soon subvert their cause, or not right their wrong, but be readier to vex them? Some, as the creditors of that widow, 2 Kings iv. though in this generally, this city* less capable,† if they find any reasonable dealing.

*Use* 3. This may persuade every one to avoid this sin, if he have no love to justice, no affection to mercy; yet if he have any fear of punishment, let him vex neither the rich nor the poor, neither his friend, nor one that is friend to him. But if he would have his curse turned into a blessing, he must have care and do his best, that when he rejoiceth and is full, the widow may be so too: as is commanded in the feast of the tabernacle, Deut. xvi. 13–15, 'And let her have a part with thee, both of the field, and vineyard,' Deut. xxiv. 19–21, that thou mayest pray with more boldness before the Lord. Deut. xxvi. 13–15, 'Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought the hallowed thing out of mine house, and also have given it unto the Levites, and to the strangers, to the fathers, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have transgressed none of thy commandments, nor forgotten them. Look down from thy holy habitation, even from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, the land that floweth with milk and honey.'

*And the fatherless.* The third particular of oppression, when they injure and vex the fatherless; such as are without all help and hope.

*Doct.* The Lord will come nigh to judgment to all such as vex, oppress, and injure the fatherless; such as are left young, not able for age, and counsel, and advice to defend themselves. So here, so in Exod. xxii. 22, 23, and Deut. xxvii. 19, Jer. xxii. 3, 5. Job shews this was just with God: Job xxxi. 21, 22. 'If I have lift up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw that I might help him in the gate: let mine arm fall from my shoulder, and mine arm be broken from the bone.'

Reasons as in the former.

*Use* 1. To persuade all in authority to judge for the fatherless when his cause comes before them, as is commanded, Isa. i. 17, which is, not that they should accept persons and prevent justice for the fatherless, because he is so,—a thing forbidden by God, and horrible before him, to favour the person of the poor, as to fear the great and rich in an unjust cause,—but that when the poor fatherless cause comes before them, against some great men or rich deceivers that seek to vex them, they should defend their cause, though they sue but *in forma pauperis*, and respect the justice of it, as if they were rich, and do for them that which is right. So shall they shew themselves gods; for where the name is given to them, there the duty is enjoined them, Ps. lxxxii. 1–4. For the magistrate is specially ordained for these, not for such as are great men, who neither will do right nor suffer wrong, able enough to right themselves and defend their own causes; or not so much for these as for the poor orphans, widows, and such like. As the defence is for the little coppice and small trees of growth, not for the great oaks, they have not such need of fencing against beasts as those.

*Use* 2. Then may many men expect the judgments of God, who vex and oppress, for their own gain, many poor orphans and fatherless children, sometimes colourably, sometimes openly. Often they colour it by pretence of law, and are legal oppressors, who, obtaining wards, do sell them from one to another, as men do horses; and when they are marriageable, tender them such matches as they must live miserably all their lives with if they accept them; so far different in nature, state, religion, and such like. Or if they accept not, when they tender of purpose such as they know they will not regard, then make they a further commodity of them, that they haply recover not that oppression of many years, if they do in all their lives. Others that are guardians and tutors, having their portions, give unto them such liberty, that by their indulgences, they grow unthrifts; that of their possessions and moveables they often interest themselves, and strip them of all, often defrauding them of many things wherewith they were put in trust; many feed them with money and enwrap them into bonds, to be paid when they come to years, triple and quadruple, that they are often out of their wealth before they be at years. Many executors, put in trust with the whole estate, make their father's conditions far worse than it was; that in this case that part of the proverb is true, There is never any dead man rich; that is, so rich as he is, or was accounted before, and in truth was; yet executors extenuate and lessen his estate to better themseles, counting him a bad cook who cannot lick his own fingers. In this number of sinners may

* The writers of this period frequently refer to certain privileges that widows had in London, more than in other parts of the kingdom.—ED.

† Qu. 'culpable?'—ED.

go many fathers-in-law, who, marrying the widow, to enrich her to himself, cares not how he defraud the children. Many mothers, to advance themselves, care not what become of the children of their own bodies. With infinite such, which, haply, men of more experience could better decipher them; but if there be others, not touched by me, he that is both witness and judge seeth all, and will judge, and indeed doth judge, the former oppressions, in the age before, by that which is in our age, and will this by that which is to come. 'I will make your children fatherless,' and so helpless, as Samuel to Agag, 1 Sam. xv. 33. But besides all this, he will fearfully destroy all such.

*Use* 3. To persuade all guilty persons, though not before men yet before God, to enter into themselves and examine their own lives and former practice, and see that they repent of this sin as well as others; and if they do truly, let them make restitution to such, else that we may use, Micah vi. 10, 'Are yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?' and set it on with vers. 11–13, 'Shall I justify the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights? for the rich men thereof are full of cruelty, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, and in making thee desolate because of thy sins;' for no restitution, no repentance, where there is knowledge and ability of all, without a man do it.*

*And oppress the stranger.* The fourth particular, injuring and oppressing of strangers. Some were strangers by nature, but proselytes to the religion of the Jews; and these, I take it, are not accounted strangers, nor so called. They had haply a note given them, and signification of it, that they were of some other country, as 2 Sam. xi. 6, 'Uriah the Hittite,' and 1 Sam. xxvi. 6, 'Abimelech the Hittite;' but they were as if they had been born in the land, and of these, I take it, he speaketh not here. But others were only peaceable in the land and state, living or trading with them; and, though not professors, yet not persecutors or open opposers and disturbers of their religion.

*Doct.* The Lord will judge, punish, and condemn those who injure and oppress strangers, such as, being born in another country, do profess the same religion or live peaceably among them. Manifest, as here, so by Exod. xxii. 22, 23; Deut. xxvii. 19; Jer. xxii. 3, 5; Ezek. xxii. 29–31; 2 Sam. xii. 9, 10, and chap. xxi. 1.

Reasons first and second, as in the former.

*Reason* 1. Because no man ought to oppress his neighbour or brother. If he do, God will judge him for it. This will be granted of all; but a stranger, and such an one as this, is as his brother and his neighbour; as is manifest, Luke x. 30, Lev. xix. 33.

* Chrysost. Ho. 5, de penitent tom. v. p. 734, a. b. c. ii.

*Reason* 2. Because the Lord he loves the strangers, Deut. x. 18. Now, to injure and oppress such strangers as he loves, or such as he loveth, he will revenge and judge.

*Use* 1. To instruct all in authority to use their authority in the defence of the strangers' right, as well as those who are home-born, and to relieve them oppressed, as we may understand that Isa. i. 17 not to accept his person no more than his who is home-born, but do him right against him that is home-born, as well as this against a stranger. If he must preserve a servant in the cruelty of his master, Deut. xxiii. 15, 16, 'Thou shalt not deliver the servant unto his master which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in what place he shall choose in one of thy cities, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not vex him.' (It was not a refuge for every wicked man, but for him that was known to be cruelly used, and fled to them for the name of the Lord.) Then must also be sanctuaries to strangers distressed.

*Use* 2. To teach us what their portion shall be from the Lord who grieve and vex strangers; that is, all such as murmur that our church should be like to a hen, which doth not only nourish up her own chickens, but also strange ones that are excluded from their own dam.* So doth the true church, and so hath ours, which these men hate, and would have them excluded only for their own profit and gain; and therefore are they ready to favour any against them as much as in them is, to hinder their right and to pervert their justice. They tell us they grow rich amongst us, and get the wealth when many are impoverished; but is their eye evil because the Lord's is good, or do they hate them because he prospers them? So did the Egyptians, the Israelites. But by what means grow they rich, otherwise than by following a lawful calling, and labouring as thou dost? And if thou be poorer, it is because thou art idler or more wicked. The Lord taught the contrary by that law, Lev. xxv. 47, &c.; and by that which he allows unto them, one and the same law, as to him that was born in the land, as is often shewed and repeated, save in the matter of remitting debts in the seventh year, Deut. xv. 1–3.

*And fear not me.* The fifth sort of sinners that the Lord will judge are in a more general kind, such as fear not him; that is, such as have no continual awe of him, in respect of his power and mercy, for these and the fruits of them to avoid evil and fly from sins. Now, in the conjunction of these is noted by some that this is the root and cause of others, *i. e.* such and such have they done, and this is the cause, hence it comes, because they fear not me.

*Doct.* The want of God's fear, wheresoever it is, is the cause and root of all sin, many and great, as the fear of God is the cause of men's flying and avoiding of sin. The latter is manifest: Prov. viii. 13, 'The

* Chrysost. Ho 46, operis imperfecti.

fear of the Lord is to hate evil;' Deut. v. 29, xxiv. 18, and xxix. 9. Then the contrary where it is not; for, take away the cause, take away the effect; and so the latter is proved, and by that Gen. xx. 10, 11, 'Then Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? Then Abraham answered, Because I thought thus, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.' Exod. i. 17, Ps. xxxvi. 1, Amos. vi. 3, Rom. iii. 18.

*Reason.* Because, as Augustine (in Ps. lxxix.), 'Two things cause all sins, desire and fear. There is a reward proposed that thou mayest sin; thou dost it because thou desirest the reward; thou art terrified with threatenings; thou dost it for fear of smart.'* Now, where the fear of God's power is, it will expel all such desire of pleasure or profit; for fear is the strongest affection, and stoppeth the passage of desires, as in a coward and one condemned. And the less fear will be overcome of a greater, as a strong and great nail drives out a small one: Luke xii. 4, 5, 'And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that are not able to do any more. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, him fear.' Now, where this fear is wanting, no marvel if they fall, either for desire or pleasure, into many and strange sins.

*Use* 1. This may teach us what to expect from men who want the fear of the Lord. They will sin for a piece of bread, a small matter of pleasure or profit. A little fear, if they have the occasion and opportunity, will draw them to anything; for, take away the banks from the sea, and the bridle from the horse: whither will not that flow, and whereinto will not he break? Such and so unruly is the corruption of man; if it have not this bank and this bridle to keep it from outrage, murder, adultery, perjury, oppression, and injustice, or any sin, will be nothing in their hands. What will they not dare to do? If kings command, they will murder innocents, not as the midwives; if queens enjoin, they will accuse, judge, condemn, and execute the guiltless, as those wicked judges, 1 Kings xxi., did innocent Naboth upon Jezebel's letters.

*Use* 2. We learn what to judge of men whom we see living either in these sins or any other the like; they are men destitute of the fear of God, even a servile fear, for this will prove it. *Vide* chap. i. 6, first effect of fear.

*Use* 3. That we may be free from these sins, let us labour for this fear. *Vide ibid.*

*Saith the Lord of hosts.* This is added for confirmation, that none should promise to themselves safety for any outward respects, as if he could not punish them. *Vide* chap. i. 4.

* Omnia peccata duæ res faciunt, cupiditas et timor: proponitur præmium ut pecces, facis propter quod cupis; terreris minis, facis propter quod times.—*August. in Psalm* lxxix.

Ver. 6. *For I am the Lord, I change not; and ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

*For I am the Lord, I change not.* This some take as a reason to confirm the former judgment threatened, that as he was the Lord of hosts, able to do all what he would, so is he in himself and in his decrees immutable; as he cannot change, no more can they be changed. Be ye well assured of this, that as I am Lord and Jehovah, eternal and without change, so are all my judgments, and whatsoever I have spoken; that know you, they shall come to pass in their time, and not one thing shall come to the ground. Howsoever they are not so speedily as you think executed, yet they shall, for they cannot but be accomplished.

*And ye sons of Jacob.* And that you are not consumed and destroyed already for these sins, do not think me mutable or yourselves without merit, that you should be spared; but this is merely from my mercy, and love, and long-suffering. I have not dealt with you according to your sins.

*Doct.* 1. God is immutable, and without change, both in himself and his nature, James i. 17.

*Doct.* 2. He is immutable in his will and his decrees.

*And ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.* I change not, therefore are you not consumed; for, being in myself merciful and longsuffering, yea, mercy and patience itself, I have spared you, when you deserved long since to have been confounded and destroyed by my judgments; and this by resemblance may we interpret out of Lam. iii. 22, 'It is the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.'

*Doct.* That men escape destruction, and are not consumed with God's judgments for their sins, it is only the mercy and goodness of God. So much is here; and that Lam. iii. 22, Gen. xix. 19, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, 2 Chron. xxx. 9. Therefore is that Isaiah xxx. 19 and liv. 7, 8, and Mat. xv. 22 and xx. 30. God hath two feet whereby he walketh towards men, so hath he two hands whereby he handleth or dealeth with men, mercy and justice; and these are both infinite. What city upheld when an infinite hand will cast down? Nothing but an infinite hand and power.

*Reason* 1. Because sin deserving God's anger, which anger is as God himself, infinite, cannot be satisfied or appeased by any that is no more than a finite creature or a finite thing; for this cannot balance with that, but only his infinite mercy with his infinite wrath. And this Lam. iii. 22, his great mercies are infinite for measure and continuance, *i. e.* such are our sins, that if he should deal righteously with us, we miserable wretches had been ten thousand times utterly undone; but we are preserved in the midst of our distresses. *Ergo*, not from us but his infinite mercy: Isaiah i. 9, 'Except the Lord of hosts had restored unto us a small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah.'

*Reason* 2. Because without the pardon of those sins

the wrath cannot be avoided, nor destruction escaped, seeing God will not justify the wicked. Now pardon of sin is only from the mercy of God, Luke i. 77, 78, Ps. xxxii. 1. All sin is against God, Ps. li. 4. *Tibi soli cui soli reddenda est ratio de peccato, qui solus es sine peccato* (Ruff.). He only can pardon sin against whom only it is. Now he pardoneth sins in mercy, and so David prayeth there for mercy; *gratiæ tuæ deputo et misericordiæ quod peccata mea tanquam glaciem solvisti; gratiæ tuæ deputo et quæcunque non feci mala* (August. Confess., vii. 2, cap. 7).

*Use* 1. This will confute the doctrine of popery, who hold by their works and satisfactions, to have, if not remission of great sins, yet of venial; or if not of sin, yet deliverance from the punishment, wherein they are the flat enemies of the mercy of God, and rob him of his honour, to give it to themselves; as if finite works and satisfactions could deliver from infinite wrath. But when they see this will not hold water, then they fly to this, that it is only from temporal punishments, and the fire of purgatory; but first for this, that it is but a new coined shift, I manifest from their prayers for the dead, whereby they thought to bring them remission of sin (*Breviar. secund. usum Sarum in vigil. mortuorum*). 'O God of the faithful! the maker and redeemer of all men, give to the souls of all the faithful deceased remission of all their sins, that by godly prayers they may obtain the pardon which they always desired, through Christ our Lord.' And again, 'Lord we beseech thee, let the prayers of thy humble servants be helpful to the souls of all the faithful deceased, that thou mayest both relieve them from their sins, and make them partakers of thy redemption, who livest,' &c. Now hence I reason, that if by their prayers they would help the faithful, whom they presumed to be free from purgatory, to bring them remission of sin, can they make us believe that they intend only deliverance from the pains of purgatory, for such as are there, and not from the guilt of sin by their sacrifices and masses? Again, it is manifestly false, that the sin pardoned, yet the punishment should remain; yea, it is against the justice of God, and so cannot be unless he can cease to be God: for the instance of David, 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14, and some other of God's children, whose sin remitted the affliction remained, is not against this, because in him it was not a punishment, but a clearing of the justice of God, before the wicked, as the place sheweth, and in others they are but purgers or preventers.

*Use* 2. To teach the church and every particular, to acknowledge it to be the mercy of God that they live and are not consumed; when they see many others are, and know themselves to have deserved the like. The church wherein we live, and we ourselves here present, have been delivered from many and strange dangers and confusions; whom shall we ascribe this unto? shall we sacrifice to the wisdom of our state, to the valour of martial men, to the power of armies, to the multitude of our people, to our own works and worthiness, to our profession of his truth, or practice of piety, our justice and equity, and such like? so may we provoke the Lord's anger indeed to consume us. Whither else must we ascribe it, but to this? being taught everywhere, it is the mercy of God that we are not consumed, whose compassions failed not; and so as the church begun her prayer, we may our praises: Ps. cxv. 1, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory, for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake.' For, considering the height of our sins, the greatness of our iniquities and rebellions, whereto else can it be ascribed? And his mercy hath drawn him to spare us, partly for ourselves, and partly for posterity, and those who shall come of us. As St Chrysostom (*Hom.* lxxx. *ad popul. Antioch.*), for ourselves, that his mercy might draw us to repentance, and to fear him, for posterity.

He spares ofttimes the root that he may preserve the fruit.* And hear how Terah, Abraham's father, was a worshipper of idols, yet in this life God punished not his impiety; for if God had cut down the root, then whence had we had such great fruit of faith as in his son? So Esau was a fornicator and unclean, and as much as in him lay, a murderer of father, mother, and brother, and of God hated, Mal. i. 2. Why is he not destroyed, why is he not cut down? Truly, beloved, to tell you the cause, it was good to be so. Esau begat Raguel, he Zara, and he Job; you see what plentiful fruit of patience had been lost, if God preventing, had stricken the root. So of us, that we might leave the seed of the church and piety behind us. This is mercy, but the former the greater, else we have as little profit of it, as Terah and Esau. And it is to be acknowledged the special mercy of God, when others perish, and their works like, that they escape. As St Augustine (*de Nat. et grat.* viii. c. 5) of the great salvation. *Universa massa pœnas debet. Qui ergo inde per gratiam liberantur non vasa meritorum suorum, sed vasa misericordiæ nominantur.*

*Use* 3. To teach men, when destruction and calamity is at hand, and God's judgments are threatened, the way how they may escape and not be confounded is, they have God's mercy towards them and upon them; therefore for this must they pray and labour, their flying truly to this will be like the city of refuge, where the avenger of blood could not slay a man-

* Parcit frequenter radici ut fructus conservet, et qualiter audi. Terah pater Abrahæ fuit idolorum cultor, sed in hoc mundo impietatis pœnas non dedit, et merito. Nam si Deus præveniens radicem præcidisset, unde tantus fidei fructus exortus fuisset. Sic Esau fornicator fuit et immundus, et matricida, et patricida, et fratricida, quantum in ipsius fuit proposito, Deo exosus, Mal. i. 2. Quarè non perditur? quarè non exciditur? Bonum est verâ, dilectissimi, causâ dicere, si succisus fuisset, maximam eleemosynæ fructum et justitiæ mundus amisisset, et qualem audi: Esau genuit Raguel, hic Zara, hic Job. Vides quantus tolerantiæ fructus esset perditus si præveniens Deus à radice pœnas exigisset.—*Chrysost. Hom.* viii. *ad popul. Antioch.*

slayer. Then shall they be sure either to be kept from them or delivered from them, kept in them or taken out of them; for whenas God's mercy doth bring remission of sin, it must needs bring the removal or change of the punishment, either it will be gone, or, if it abide, the nature will be changed. For sin taken away, that cannot continue, or not in the former nature; and a man shall be safer and more comfortable with this in divers afflictions than without it, though he be never so free; you shall rejoice more cheerfully and more truly with a good conscience in the midst of troubles, than with an evil in the midst of many pleasures.* Now thus it is from the feeling of the mercy of God and remission of sin. If you have God's favour, despair not though you fall into a furnace, whereas if he be angry you may not be bold in paradise. Paradise did no good to Adam sinning, and the hot furnace could do no harm to the three children that were innocent.† And if they obtain this, it shall not only be their sanctuary thus, but it shall be to them as a fountain whence all blessings, as rivers, shall rise and spring. It will be like the philosopher's stone, that will turn all metal into gold; so this, all miseries into happy comforts. Even like the ark brought into the house of Obed-edom, 2 Sam. vi. 11, that brought a blessing upon the house and all that he had. So God's mercy brought into the heart, will be the cause that they and their house and all that they have shall prosper and be preserved for ever, to his glory and their eternal comfort.

Ver. 7. *From the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them; return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts; but ye said, wherein shall we return?*

*From the days of your fathers are you gone away.* In this verse begins the second part of the chapter, containing an expostulation with this people as touching their sins, mixed with an exhortation to repentance, which of some is accounted the third part of this chapter. Now in this verse are both these: a reasoning with them as concerning their sins, and an exhortation to repentance; the first hath the reproof in general, for committing evil, and omission of doing things commanded, and a denial of it by the people; the second hath an exhortation to repentance, with the promise of a gracious acceptance.

*From the days of your fathers*, &c. The general reproof, or, in particular, for committing things forbidden, and omitting things commanded; but in these first words their sins are amplified from the time and continuance in them; *i.e.*, it is not yet yesterday or a few days since you transgressed against me, your sins are not of short time and small continuance, but you have been long rebellious against me, even since the days of your fathers; so long have I been patient towards you, so much are you the more hardened in your sins, and have the less to say for yourselves, and I may the more justly punish you.

The exhortation to repentance is pressed and urged, with the benefit that will follow it—God will return to them; and by this promise would he entice and provoke them, meaning he would declare and make manifest he was appeased towards them, mitigating and lessening their punishments and calamities, and restoring many blessings unto them. This of God's returning is figurative, for he properly cannot be said to change either place or mind. *Cujus est de omnibus omnino rebus tam fixa sententia, quam certa præsentia.* —*Vide* August. *de Civ. Dei* lib. xv. cap. 25.

*But ye say, wherein shall we return?* The prophet returns to his expostulation with the people about their sins, and here reproves them for their impudent hypocrisy and pride; that they said they needed no repentance or returning to God, being guilty unto themselves of no sin, no transgression, or falling away from God, *i.e.* what have we committed, or when did we fall from the Lord, thou callest us to return? They had so long accustomed themselves not to restore and pay unto the Lord that was his, that now they say they owed no such thing. Now these words contain the continuance of their rebellion or obstinacy.

*Doct.* When men once give way unto sin and entertain it, they are often and easily drawn on to continue it from time to time, day to day, and to grow aged and ancient in sin, especially if the Lord punish them not for it. So much is here, and in the old world, and in Sodom, &c. Isa. lxv. 2, and Hosea x. 9, 'Oh Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah;' that is, either from the time of the Judges, when they made war against the Benjamites touching the Levite's wife, from which time they continued idolatry; or as some, from the times of Saul or Solomon. Example of David's sin for many months, for not repenting he continued it, but Solomon many years.

*Reason* 1. Because the preserver of men from sin is the grace of God; either general, as in Abimelech, Gen. 20; or particular, as Isa. xxx. 21, restraining or sanctifying grace. Now this the apostle calls fire, 1 Thes. v. 19, or compares it to it; that as fire, by withdrawing of matter, oil from lamp, or fuel from fire, or by adding contrary, as water, so the Spirit is quenched or forced to recoil by sins; no marvel, then, when the resister is gone or grieved, if there be long continuance.

*Reason* 2. Because custom is another nature, and things by custom are in us as if they were bred. Now natural things are hardly changed, the continuance easy; a man can hardly forget his mother's tongue, hardly a speech he hath been accustomed to, so in this.

* Verius ac jucundius gaudebis de bona conscientia inter molestias, quam de mala inter delicias.—*August.*

† Si Deum benevolum habeas, licet in fornacem cadas, ne desperes, sicut si succenseat, licet in paradiso sis, ne confidas. Adæ peccanti nihil profuit paradisus: pueris benè agentibus nihil obfuit fornax.—*Chrysost.* Hom iv. *ad pop. Antioch.*

*Reason* 3. Because the custom of sinning takes away the sense of sin, even a little custom and giving way to it.* Now when a man is without the sense of sin, hardly seeing and knowing of it, less feeling how it woundeth and pierceth him, but finding for the present sin pleasant or profitable, no marvel if he continue it, and say, Prov. xxiii. 35, 'They have stricken me, but I was not sick; they have beaten me, but I knew not when I awoke; therefore will I seek it yet still.'

*Use* 1. To teach men to take heed how they give way to sin; but if sin enter upon them (as who sinneth not?), then with speed to part with it and shake it off, lest custom and continuance follow, so that when he hath a will he shall have no power to rise out, he will be so entangled; as with him that taketh up money for necessity, he shall easily find that he may continue it, and be in the usurer's bonds upon good security, but when he would out of them, the longer he hath continued the less he will find himself able, and so be desirous to continue it till he have stripped himself out of all; so in this, then must he labour to rise out of them and give no place nor way to them.

*Use* 2. Then it is a goodness and mercy of God to a man, when he gives a means to him either to keep him from giving way to sin or from sitting down in sin, which of himself he will soon do. *Vide* Mal. i. 7, *Doct.* 1.

Now in that they had continued thus long, and were not consumed, it commends another doctrine.

*Doct.* The Lord is long-suffering and patient towards such as sin and provoke him, Rev. iii. 20.

*Gone away from mine ordinances.* Reproving them for their sins, he tells them that is sin which is disagreeing to his laws and ordinances, to his word.

*Doct.* That is evil and sin, and unlawful to be done, which is repugnant to the law of God, or a departing from it, may it seem to be never so profitable to man or bring glory to God; as on the contrary that is good and righteousness which is agreeable to the law and word of God, seem it never so unprofitable to men, or not behoveful for God's glory. *Vide* chap. ii. 10, *doct. ulti.*

*And have not kept them.* They are accused, not only because they committed things contrary to the law, but because they did not things agreeable to it; not only committed the forbidden, but omitted the commanded.

*Doct.* They do not only sin who offend against the law, doing the things forbidden by it; but those who do not observe and do the things commanded by it, but leave them undone; manifest by that as a breach of the first table and precept, Jer. x. 25, 'Pour out thy fury upon the families that have not called upon thy name.' Deut. xxviii. 58, 59 and xxvii. 26, Mat. xxv.

* Consuetudo peccandi tollit sensum peccati.

*Reason* 1. Because the law is affirmative and commanding, as well as negative and forbidding; and though the precepts and commandments run most negatively, save only the fourth and fifth, yet they all carry the affirmative, as the prophets, their interpreters shew; and as those two affirmatives carry their negative, so the eight negatives carry the affirmatives; so that an omission is as well a transgression as a commission, and so a sin.

*Reason* 2. Because they go against love and charity, and therefore sin; for charity to God and man requires all to be done and nothing omitted that may glorify and honour him, and be helpful and profitable to them; for so it is said to be bountiful, that is helpful, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. But specially if we consider that every man must love God above himself, and man as himself; now to omit anything that is good for himself is a breach of charity to himself, then so of these.*

*Obj.* Sin is an action, but the omission is only a privation, that is, an omitting of that which ought to be done; how can it then be a sin and they sin who omit it?

*Ans.* There is an action in sins of omission, thus:—It is a sin of omission not to love his neighbour, not to come to the congregation to hear the word and receive the sacrament; in these there is an action, for sometimes they are done upon purpose and deliberation, and so he that offends will not love his neighbour, will not go to the assembly; and here is a plain action of his will. But sometimes they are omitted because a man thinks not of them, not of any purpose or contempt; now here, though there be not an action of the same kind, yet there is an action repugnant to the law. He thinks not of the assembly, because he would walk or take his recreation, and these actions are repugnant to that good work; and sometimes the action is not at the same time, but went a little before. As a man gives himself to excess and drunkenness over night, and after cannot rise in the morning, to be present there; here is an action, though not at the same time, and of the same kind, yet that which is the cause of that omission. All sin is not an action, it is only true of sin of commission, which is some positive act done, which the will should not consent to do; sin of omission is but a privation of good. As the school and Basil. *Malum boni privatio est, cæcitas ex oculorum perditione provenit.* (*Serm. quod* Deus non est author peccati.) *Facere cordis cogitare est, quia corporis est cogitata proficere.* (Chrysost. *ser. de levium criminum periculis.*)

*Use* 1. Then many men, if they will look upon their reckonings, are guilty of a multitude of sins, more than ever they thought themselves to be, seeing they have only accounted sins of commission to be theirs, and never of omission. Many have thought they were bound to avoid the evil, yet not to do the good,

* Peccatum est, cum vel non est charitas quæ esse debet, vel minor est quam debet.—*August. de perfect. justitiæ*, xv.

and so account their sins. Many who account it a sin to have other gods, have never accounted it a sin not to know the true God, to believe him, and fear him; not to pray unto him, which they did only in respect of their own necessities, and never of any duty to him, nor of avoiding of sin; so in the rest of the commandments. These must know that they have to account with God for these, if they have already for the other; nay, he never accounted nor repented of any one who doth not for these, for he can have no true conscience of sin that hath not right science and knowledge of these for sins; who if they reckon not again with God, and bring not true repentance, must not look to have peace, but a controversy with God. And if, Judges v. 23, Meroz was cursed, not for fighting against God's people, but not assisting them in the battle against the mighty; if Moses was punished with deprivation of the possession or sortage of the land of Canaan, not for dishonouring of God, but not sanctifying him in the presence of the children of Israel, Num. xx. 12; if the rich man was cast into the torments of hell, not for taking away food from Lazarus, but because he did not relieve his wants, Luke xvi.; how shall they escape the curse, inherit the kingdom, the spiritual Canaan, how not be tormented in hell?

*Use* 2. Then let not men think much if they be censured as men who have gone astray from their birth, while all their piety and honesty is but a negative piety, and a negative honesty, and not an affirmative, but in little and slender sort. Here is all they can say for themselves, they are not idolaters, and open profane persons, scoffers of piety, they are not swearers, they are no adulterers, thieves, or oppressors; but, in the meantime, they are not zealous for his worship, nor conscionable professors, nor such as hunger after righteousness, nor such as fear the dreadful and great name of the Lord, nor love of mercy, and the like; they may be judged as wicked men, and as those who are in the displeasure of God. As Tertullian, *Nusquam et nunquam excusatur, quod Deus damnat.* So it cannot be but sin which God is displeased withal.

*Return unto me.* In this exhortation following the reproof there may be noted from the coherence two points:

First, the patience of God towards sinners, waiting for their return.

Secondly, that none is so desperately sinful but there is hope he may return and be converted.

*And I will return unto you.* Here is the promise annexed to the former exhortation, to draw them to hearken to it, and obey it; a promise of removing, or mitigating of their calamities and plagues; and first, in the general, observe, they must perform and do their parts, else he will not do his.

*Doct.* 1. God is not bound to give man anything he hath promised or covenanted, unless he perform his covenant and conditions; *vide* chap. ii. 4, 'I sent this commandment that my covenant might stand.'

Again, if they repent, he will return, remove, or mitigate their plagues and punishments.

*Doct.* 2. Repentance is the most certain means and sovereign medicine to mitigate and remove, to prevent and keep away judgments and plagues of God from the persons of men, or the things that belong unto them; manifest as here, so that, 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14, 'If I shut the heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the grasshopper to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people, among whom my name is called upon, do humble themselves, and pray, and seek my presence, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear in heaven, and be merciful to their sin, and will heal their land.' Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 'I will speak suddenly against a nation, or against a kingdom to pluck it up, and to root it out, and to destroy it; but if this nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their wickedness, I will repent of the plague that I thought to bring upon them.' And xxvi. 3, 'If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the plague which I have determined to bring upon them, because of the wickedness of their works.' Luke xiii. 3–5. We have examples, David and the Ninevites, and such like. Now I say, *remove or mitigate*, because they are not always taken away when the party repenteth. After David's repentance the child died, and the sword departed not from his house. And the prophet, Micah vii. 9, brings the people humbling themselves under a corporal punishment.

*Reason* 1. Because God is just. Now justice punisheth not where there is no sin, or not twice a sin punished before; now he that repents hath taken away sin.* Sin begets sorrow, and sorrow destroys sin, as the wood breeds the worm, and the worm eats the wood; yea, repentance punisheth, 1 Cor. xi. 31, repentance prevents or removes punishments.

*Reason* 2. Yet though the punishment be mitigated, it is not always removed, because in his love and wisdom he discerns it good it should still remain as a chastisement, not punishment, both to humble them and prevent sin in them, to be a terror and an example to others, and to justify himself before men.

*Use.* To see the necessity of repentance, and to exhort us to fall upon the practice of it, seriously and speedily, that that is threatened may be prevented, so that we take the right course: Rev. ii. 5, 'I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.' There is the threatening against the church of Ephesus, but the next words shew us the way of prevention, 'Except thou repent.'

*But ye say, wherein shall we return?* The prophet

* Peccatum genuit dolorem, dolor contrivit peccatum, ut lignum vermem, vermis lignum.—*Chrysost.*

having reproved them in the general, in the beginning of the verse, proceedeth now to particulars, in these words; and this by occasion of the former words, which noteth out to us their spiritual pride, that conceived of themselves to have no need of repentance, for they were righteous, and had not any such sin in them that they need returning.

*Doct.* Spiritual pride, when men conceive of themselves they are rich and righteous, and have no need of repentance and of Christ, is an odious and vile sin: Rev. iii. 17, 'I am rich, I stand in need of nothing.'

Ver. 8. *Will a man spoil his gods? Yet have ye spoiled me. But ye say, Wherein have we spoiled thee? In tithes and offerings.*

*Will a man spoil his gods?* The prophet proceedeth to other sins, and a great one: horrible and impious sacrilege, which was committed by these, in detaining from God his tithes and first fruits; and, in reproving this, he argueth, first, from the general right, then from the fact, and thirdly from the event. The general right is, no man ought to spoil another or defraud him. Fraud and rapine is a heinous kind of injury, and so the more great and grievous when it is joined with greatest audaciousness and contempt; as if they defraud and rob him to whom they owe much, whose authority they ought to reverence, and whom they ought greatly to honour, as the prince and the king, the judge and the priest. The force of this reason stands in the interrogation, 'Will a man spoil his gods?' an argument from the comparison of the persons, betwixt man and God: the one so common and mean, the other so excellent and great. It is a sinful thing, and blameworthy, for men to injure men, even the meanest, much more an honourable man, as the prince; but most wicked and impious to deal so with the great and glorious God, their prince and governor.

*Yet have ye spoiled me.* Here is their fact, amplified from the persons who and to whom; ye, me, you whom I have enriched with so many great and extraordinary blessings and benefits, and who ought specially to honour and worship me, and give me all that you possibly can. The word translated *spoiling* is used among the Hebrews to signify the taking away of another man's goods, and specially by fraud, as in that Prov. xxii. 22, 23. And so the meaning is, Will a man spoil his god? that is, take away by fraud that is his god's; but you have done so to me; you have taken away my goods, and the things that belong to me, by fraud and deceit.

*But ye say, Wherein?* This is the exception of this people against that the prophet hath accused them of, and it is by denying the fact, and think so to reject the fact from themselves, and put God to prove when and wherein they had done any such injury to him.

*In tithes and offerings.* The Lord proceeds and replies, shewing them wherein they had spoiled him, and were sacrilegious, in the tenths and first fruits, which the Lord had appointed for his priests and the officers of the temple, they had fraudulently or violently or howsoever detained from them. By offerings is here understood the first fruits which they were to bring and offer to the Lord towards the maintenance of the tabernacle and the offices of it. He reproves them here of sacrilege against God and his worship; and in condemning of this, to aggravate the greatness of it, he shews how affectioned idolaters and superstitious men are unto their false and feigned gods; to give to them and not to despoil or take anything from them; for so much the interrogation sheweth, *Will he?* He will not, but deal most liberally with him.

*Doct.* Idolaters at all times are, and have been, very liberal and bountiful to their idols, and their service, and their false worship, and so far from taking from them, as they have thought nothing too much for them; so much the prophet insinuates here, and as much is manifest, Ezek. xvi. 16–19, 'And thou didst take thy garments, and deckedst thine high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like thing shall not come, neither hath any done so. Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels made of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them. And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set mine oil and my perfume before them. My meat also which I gave thee, as fine flour, oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: thus it was, saith the Lord God;' Exod. xxxii. 3, They brake off and gave away their golden ear-rings to make an idol; 2 Kings xvi. 3 and xvii. 17, they bestowed their children on idols; Judges xvii. 3, the mother of Micah gave two hundred shekels of silver to the founder to make a graven and a molten image.

*Reason* 1. Because this is a voluntary and free service, of their own heads and inventions. Now, we see in all things men spend more freely and more liberally upon their own inventions than upon those things which they are tied unto; men bestow more upon their own children.

*Reason* 2. Because idolatry and superstition is natural and sensible, agreeable to nature and sense, and so more pleasant and delightful; on things that are delightful and pleasant, men bestow more time, more tendance, and more goods.

*Reason* 3. Because idolatry is accounted adultery, an idol a harlot, an idolater an adulterer, *passim in Scripturis.* Now, as one saith, *Non minor superstitionis quam libidinis impetus ad rapiendos homines.* Men are as mad upon an idol as upon a harlot, and, as they will spend all to satisfy their lust, so to follow their superstition.

*Use* 1. This may serve to reject, and justly, the suit of our papists for favour and forbearance upon this ground, because of the great cost which their ancestors

they say have bestowed upon this land, in building of schools, colleges, and hospitals, and endowed them with rich possessions (*D. Bishop prefat.*), they must first presuppose, and indeed prove, that it is the truth which they profess, and that theirs is the true religion, else may any idolater in the world make the same reason for himself; and so may an adulterer plead for favour, because he hath been at such cost and charges with his harlot, and endowed her and hers with such great riches. But if not the one, why the other? Why might not the Canaanites, by the same reason, have pleaded for favour from the Israelites? Deut. vi. 10, 11. Yet it was not any motive to bring favour unto them; nay, for all that they were commanded to destroy them. And can the church have a better guide, and Christian commonwealths a better example? But it may be that they suppose that this should prove that their superstition is true religion, because they thus decked it and bestowed infinite cost otherwise upon it. By the same reason may any idolater in the world plead that it is the truth and the true worship of God, seeing their bounty towards their false gods hath been equal in most things, and superior in divers, to this of theirs; yea, by this reason might many a harlot plead against the lawful and just wife that she was not so, but herself, because she lives in the house and is maintained daintily and gorgeously, when the other is excluded and shut out in poverty and misery. But if not this, why that? But in all this I grant them but that, which may easily be proved to the contrary, that our ancestors in the first institution of these things did not intend the popish faith and religion.

*Use* 2. Then is it not to be wondered at if we see the great liberality of our superstitious papists towards their superstitions and idolatry; for it hath been so with all idolaters whatsoever, and no reason but it should be so with this, which is more natural and fitting the humours and corruption of nature than any other superstition in the world. And as some say of manna, that it fitted and was tasteful to every palate according to the humour of it, so may we more certainly say of this, as hath been divers times shewed, that it is fitting to the ambitious, covetous, voluptuous, licentious, and every one of what affection soever. Is it any marvel, then, though men be marvellous liberal, whenas every man that hath it cares not what he bestows upon his humour? Besides, their doctrine of merits hath brought them in no small gain, specially from men who lie a-dying, who to enrich them (though they laboured all their life to enrich their wife and children), yet care not how poor they leave them then, because they are so taught that by such means they may redeem their soul and satisfy for many things they else might suffer. What will not a man give to save his life when he is upon the gallows? more in this.

*Yet ye have spoiled me.* Their fact and offence, in the relation and comparison, which stands thus: they, that is, idolaters, will not spoil, but they will cleave fast unto their gods, and be very devout, yet ye have not done so to me.

*Doct.* Idolaters often cleave faster, and are more devout to their idols and their worship than they who profess the truth cleave, or are devoted to the Lord.

*Use.* It should teach us in that to imitate them, lest they rise up in judgment and condemn us. Let it be our resolution, as it is in Micah iv. 5, 'For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.'

*Have ye.* Upon whom I have bestowed many and great things, yet have ye spoiled me, and so makes their sin the greater.

*Doct.* They who have received more from God than others, if they contemn and injure him, and take from him his due, or any such like, they offend more than the rest, *vide* cap. i. 12; but ye have polluted it.

*Spoiled me.* They took away and withheld the maintenance of his ministers, who were the instruments and means of his worship; therefore he accounts himself to be injured and spoiled. Hence a general doctrine.

*Doct.* The injury, contempt, and abuse committed against the means of God's worship, is held to be done against God himself. Thus God takes this done to his ministers, *vide* cap. i. 7. The table of the Lord is not to be regarded.

*In tithes and offerings.* This is that wherein they had offended, and God complains he was spoiled, because the portion of their goods which was due to him, they had kept from his house and ministers.

*Doct.* It is a sacrilegious and impious thing for men to withhold or withdraw the maintenance of the ministers. So much the prophet affirmeth here; so much all those places prove, which command such things to be given to the ministers; as Numb. xviii. 21, 'For behold I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve in the tabernacle of the congregation;' Deut. xii. 19, 'Beware that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth;' and chap. xiv. 27, Neh. xiii. 10, 11, 'And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given, and that every one was fled to his land, even the Levites and singers that executed the work. Then reproved I the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? and I assembled them, and set them in their place;' Luke xviii. 12, 1 Cor. ix. 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, Gal. vi. 6, 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

*Reason* 1. Because this is to rob and spoil God, as it is here affirmed; and proved by that, where the ministers' maintenance being tithes, is called the Lord's, and holy to the Lord: Lev. xxvii. 30, 'Also all the tithe of the land, both of the seed of the ground, and of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's, it is holy to the Lord.' Things are said to be the Lord's, either by a common duty, and as it were the homage that all

creatures owe unto the Lord as their creator, or in respect of his rule and government of them; for this, all things are his, both good and bad, of which that is: Ps. xxiv. 1, 'The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is: the world and they that dwell therein.' Or in respect of a propriety and immediate right he hath in them, and so are tithes, for in the other respects the nine parts are his, as the earth is his. Then must this needs be usurpation and sacrilege to keep it from the Lord and his deputies, upon whom he hath bestowed them, Numb. xviii. 21.

*Reason* 2. Because they are called holy to the Lord in the same place, which serves for all the maintenance of the ministry, called so because they are separated from man and man's use. Now to take holy things from the Lord is sacrilege, as in Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v.; even of things separated by man to the Lord, which might not be altered, Lev. xxvii. 27, 28.

*Reason* 3. Because without this maintenance the worship and service of God must needs fall to the ground, understand public worship, as Neh. xiii. 10, 11. And that of Origen: Unless the people bring oil, the lamp will go out in the temple.* Then it is impious to withdraw this.

*Reason* 4. Because it is impious to retain the hire of a labourer in the things of this world and the body, is it not more to retain his who laboureth for the soul, unless men think they may require his blood for nought in this more than in other service?

*Reason* 5. Because it is impious and a breach of the eighth commandment to keep a man's own from him, whether his own by his labour or the special gift of God, as this is both.

*Reason* 6. Because the withholding or withdrawing of this, as it hindereth the worship of God, so the salvation of men, for which they labour; for how should they labour in either, if they have not their due and honest and competent maintenance?

*Quest.* What do you account or call the maintenance of the minister? are tithes yet in force, and due unto the ministers by the law, as if no other maintenance might be for them, or otherwise raised?

*Ans.* I answer, saving the judgments of other men (who have laboured to prove them so, whose reasons have not so persuaded me, as they made show of at first), they are not strictly; first, because then that law, Numb. xviii. 20, which indeed was given as a reason of this, should then still be in force. And so every man should renounce his patrimony that takes the maintenance of the church, which they will not yield unto; nay, reason is for the contrary, seeing that they may use both for the better credit of their ministry, and the better performance of the commandment: 1 Tim. iii. 2, 'To keep hospitality.' Secondly, then should that law be in force, Numb. xviii. 26, 28; and so there must be a high priest or chief bishop to receive this, as the pope did, and which is now appropriated to the crown; but men will not contend for that. Thirdly, then, that law of the tithe of the third year should be in force, Deut. xiv. 28, 29, which is not approved or allowed. Fourthly, then should I condemn all those churches and countries where no such law is observed; but men are otherwise maintained (though questionless nothing so fitly and competently), as living in a gross breach of the moral law. Fifthly, then should I free all cities, who have not fields, nor vineyards, oxen nor kine, sheep nor other things that are titheable, from being bound by the moral law to pay and give maintenance to their ministers; because I find not, neither directly in the word, nor by collection gathered by any, that merchants and tradesmen were bound to pay tithe of their merchandise and trades, but no reason; but 1 Cor. ix. 11. And that they should give maintenance to those who watch for them, and must give an account of their souls. These, with the like reasons, have prevailed with me to settle upon this, that tithes are not due by a perpetual and the moral law, as if nothing else might come in the place of them. Yet I say, that tithes in our land and church, and in divers other churches of Christendom, where there are things titheable, have their ground from the word of God. First, in respect of the equity of the law of God, being this, that the ministers ought to live of the people, and to have sufficient and competent means by them; for the ox's mouth must not be muzzled. He that serves must live of the altar, and so of the gospel; which equity and substance of the law is moral, and ought always to continue.

Because the laws of the land and of the church have confirmed this ancient constitution (which in itself is different; the general laid down in the word, and the particular man hath appointed), and so tithes may be said to be by the law of God, because they are by the law of man agreeable to the word, which laws God hath commanded to obey. Thirdly, because tithes have been dedicated to the church and ministers by men themselves, and in that dedication there was neither error nor superstition. Therefore due, and not to be taken away, no more than Ananias and Sapphira might take away any part of that which they have vowed to the church; only haply, according to the rule of the law, they may be redeemed, but not with less, but with a thing of the same value, or rather according to the law, Deut. xxvii. 31.

1. Now, further, I say that this maintenance is the most fit and competent, most equal and indifferent. First, because the wisdom of God, in the beginning of the church, established this, which was not merely ceremonial, but had a moral equity. Now, how can they have an example of greater authority, and more worthy to be followed? Again, because it affordeth competent sustenance for the one, when he shall live of the tenth, and not of the twentieth or fifteenth part, which were too little, and not grieving and oppressing

* Nisi dederit oleum populus, extinguetur lucerna in templo.—*Orig.*

to the other, when he hath the nine parts reserved to himself.

2. Because the ministers' lives are subject to the same wants that other men's lives are, it is fit and convenient that what they provide for themselves thereof, they should afford a part to him that laboureth in another great work for them.

3. Because, 1 Tim. iii. 2, he must be given to hospitality, which shall be performed better of him if he have things in their kind, and so have his provision.

4. Because, when the minister should receive all good things for his maintenance and necessity, and that, as Gal. vi. 6, it might be a present and palpable admonition to him that he also should minister in their wants in spiritual things committed to his charge.

5. Because that as the blessing of God was upon the people, their lands and labours, or denied to them, he also might be partaker of their abundance and want; to abound with them, and to want with them; for where much, he was to receive much, and where little, the less, always proportionable to them, Num. xviii. 27, that out of this fellow-feeling he might praise God with them, or pray more earnestly for them.

Now, as for cities, where there are few or no things titheable, there the maintenance is, and must be, such as the law hath provided, if it be sufficient to maintain a minister that laboureth amongst them, in such sort as he may not be distracted with want, or burdened with cares, or his ministry disgraced by his poverty; which if it be not, either by reason of his charge or the hardness of the times, there ought to be an addition according to men's abilities; and in places where the law hath provided little or nothing, there are the people bound to provide their labourers their hire; not upon charity or alms, but as a matter of justice, according to that, 1 Cor. ix. 1. As he that goeth to warfare may of duty and justice require his wages of those for whom he fighteth, he that planteth a vineyard may of duty challenge to eat thereof, or he who feedeth a flock may of duty challenge to eat the milk of the flock. Then the minister, doing all these, may challenge his maintenance of duty, and they in justice are bound to give it him; yea, part of their goods being due to the Lord as a homage or quit-rent of all their goods, acknowledging that they hold and have all things they possess and enjoy from him, and therefore owe all service, honour, and obedience unto him. Now seeing he hath no need of these things himself, but hath given them to others, his ministers, by whom he will receive them, and communicate by them spiritual things also, not taking his own for nothing, these must know that though no law of man bind them, yet are they bound to give of their goods, and with some proportion of the tenth (for a better rule they cannot have), to the maintenance of the ministry.

*Use.* This accuseth and convinceth all those of sacrilege and impiety, who have their hands defiled with the spoil of the church and of God, all which we may reduce to these two heads, that they are such as do it under the covert of law, or without law. First, such as have impropriations, or appropriations; the one arguing that they are improperly theirs; the other, that they are taken from the right owners, and appropriated to them. Call it what you will, it is apparent sacrilege, specially in those places where an hundred pounds is taken away, and but ten pounds left for the minister. And so no man of parts and sufficiency will take the place, but an unlearned minister, that the people perish for want of knowledge; and here I would have them consider, whether, they having the provision, shall not assure and give account for those souls that perish for want of spiritual food, which comes by their means, of which I make no doubt but they shall, as Dan. i. And will they buy their sweet morsels thus dear, if they pretend the law allowing them? If I were before the law-makers, I would say somewhat to it; but to them I say, if it be *jure fori*, it is not *jure poli*, as St Augustine in another case; and we shall all appear before such a judge, as no law but the law of the highest can be pleaded. And all the laws of men shall lie in the dust, as themselves. To these may I add donatives, which at the suit of these parasites, the pope would give to one man or more the fruit of the church to be used at his pleasure; yea, reserving nothing for the church, but left the care to his devotion, if he could get a man for forty shillings or a canvass doublet; yea, of this sort are these leases allowed by them to be let by the patron, bishop, or incumbent, to alienate these things from the ministry, and then rob the church and spoil the Lord. To these I may add portions and pensions, immunities, privileges, customs, and prescriptions, which also came from them, and have crept into reformed churches, all which, are [in] their kind and measure, guilty of this sacrilege. But there are other without pretence of law, which rob God and the church, as patrons, who, taken for the defence of the church, who think they may bestow the living of the church as they think best, and therefore lay them to their houses for provision, and get a chaplain, like one of the knights of the post, that cares not for an oath, to swear he is free from simony when he hath agreed for a living of an hundred pounds *per annum*,* as the Levite, Judges xvii. 10; which ariseth from either the blindness of their minds, or the love of worldly things, or envy and evilness of their eye and heart; but whatsover the cause is, the fact is no less than sacrilege, and they to answer as before. Such also as abuse their ministers by fraud or cunning, or power to detain part of the due, or for the quality of the tithe, to pay the worst and vilest unto them.

Ver. 9. *Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have spoiled me, even this whole nation.*

*Ye are cursed with a curse.* This verse contains

* Upon hope of better preferment.

the event, God's curse upon them for that they had done, as a proof they had sinned, else had not such a thing come from the just God. He cursed them with penury, and want, and famine; they pinched him, and he them; yea, they had thought in the famine to have kept the more to themselves, and they had the less for keeping from him that which was his; for spoiling him, he justly and worthily spoiled them, and so by their own craft had they deceived themselves, and diminished their store, when they thought to have increased it. And so he points them out the cause why this was befallen them.

*Even this whole nation.* The subject of the punishment, the same who were the subject of the sin; even all, rich and poor, high and low, from the highest to the lowest, had spoiled God; and therefore he laid his plague as large, and with as full extent. The judgment and curse of God upon this people was a famine, as the verses following shew. And they having pinched him, he doth so deal with them, pays them home in the same kind. In the general thus:

*Doct.* 1. It is a just and no unusual thing with God to punish men in the like kind as they have offended, either against himself or men. *Vide* chap. i. 5, 'Your eyes shall see it.'

Now for the particular, that the curse, and this curse, is upon such as spoil the Lord and his church, we observe;—

*Doct.* 2. God will justly punish with his curses, and specially with famine and scarcity, all such as do spoil him and take the ministers' maintenances from them; which, as it is affirmed here, so that of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1, 2, &c., doth prove it, the curse being upon them for withholding that from the Lord they had voluntary given unto him; for the curse was not for the lie and dissembling, though it were the heavier for that, they having bound two sins together; like to this, though not in all things. The same is that Haggai, i. 6-9, 'Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled; ye clothe you, but ye be not warm; and he that earneth wages, putteth the wages into a broken bag. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. And why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.' And Deut. xxvi. 12, 13, 15, when they have given the tithes to the Levites, they may pray and expect a blessing. It seemeth therefore to teach, that without that the curse must be upon them.

*Reason* 1. Because it is just with him to curse those who hinder his worship, and are principal means, either that it cannot be attended upon, or not as it ought. If he cursed Eli's sons, for making his sacrifices to be abhorred, 1 Sam. ii., how them by whom they are hindered from being performed at all!

*Reason* 2. Because he will curse those who withhold the hire and just wages of such as do but reap their earthly harvest, and work that work for them, James v. 14. How much more them who withhold the duty from those who do labour in the spiritual harvest!

*Reason* 3. Because it is just with God, to deny men food for the body, when they deny food to the soul; to famish the body, when they do the soul; which they do, who withdraw from the minister his maintenance; for wanting this, he cannot attend the work of his calling.

*Use* 1. Hence we may observe, that ministers' maintenance is not of alms, free gift, or voluntary, when God's curse shall be upon them who withhold them; neither ever was it so, no, not in the apostles' times, saving the judgment of some; for the reasons of the apostles served in their times, as well as in ours; and if any difference, more principally in theirs: all which urge a duty, and justice, and not alms. Besides that, the apostle St Paul professeth that he took wages, 2 Cor. xi. 8, though he oftentimes holily boasteth with the Corinthians, that he preached freely, and took but what was voluntarily given, as likewise others did; lest if they should have demanded the tithes and priests' livings, they might have been thought that gain was rather sought by them than the glory of God, and salvation of his people. And therefore the apostle Paul wrought with his hands before he would give any such scandal, having gifts that were extraordinary, that without study they were able to preach. Besides, that similitude of Chrysostom is not without sense, that as a new physician coming unknown into a city, at the first will administer to all, and heal all *gratis*, that he may be known; but his skill being known, will after take wages; so Christ at first in his disciples preached freely, but after, when he had begot faith in men, then he took his due, specially extraordinary gifts ceasing, that they did all things with extreme labour, for the good of their people. Neither in reason can they be alms, because they are wages, or a reward of their labour: 1 Tim. v. 18, 'The labourer is worthy of his reward,' and alms do exceed the desert of the beggar, or almsmen, but not in these things, seeing, 1 Cor. ix. 11, 'If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?' And there is no comparson betwixt spiritual and carnal things, but specially seeing God's curse upon them, who do withhold it from them.

*Use* 2. To teach men, as they fear and would avoid the curse of God, so to give the minister his due, and not to withhold or withdraw anything from him, lest they draw the curse of God upon them; and if they have anything already, to restore it, lest, though they think they are not yet cursed for it, yet abusing his patience, he do accuse * them with a curse. And are not many accursed, both patrons and people, that they

* Qu. 'accurse'?—ED.

have not a man of gifts and wisdom, but they perish for want of knowledge, seeing their prophecy must fail? And many that are the great spoilers of the church, and gather much by it, yet the curse of God is upon them, that they are always in want and needy, their wealth melting away as snow before the sun, they being many of them given over to such sins as waste both body and goods, so that *male parta, male dilabuntur.* And if curses be not upon many, yet, as James v. 1, they shall come upon them, and God will take as much from them another way as they do this way from him. Let me use the words of Augustine: The Lord saith, Give me tithes, else if thou wilt not give me the tenth, I will take away the nine parts. And doubtless many men, if they could discern this as well as other things, whereby they have sustained loss, they should find that they have gained little at the year's end by keeping the Lord's due from his ministers, but have lost a great deal more by it.

*For ye have spoiled me, even this whole nation.* The repetition of the cause of the curse, shewing how justly he had generally sent this plague and curse upon them, because they were generally thus corrupted.

*Doct.* When sins are grown general, it is usual and just with the Lord to send a general punishment, Mal. i. 4.

Ver. 10. *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven unto you, and pour you out a blessing without measure.*

*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse.* Having thus reproved and threatened them, he begins to exhort them to change that course and leave their corruption, promising that he would change things to the better, so they would change.

*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse.* The exhortation not any longer to deal fraudulently with God, to bring what you list and keep back what you list, but bring my whole due and all the tithes into the treasure, that the Levites and priests may be nourished who do me service and serve at the altar; or as some, that my worship may still be maintained, the fire and lamps go not out.

*Prove me now herewith.* The exhortation is enforced, first, by a promise of great increase, contrary to their own opinions; whereas they thought they should have less, he promiseth it should be far better with them. The manner is thus: he would have them make proof of him, bring the tithes, and make trial if he will not be constant in his goodness and bountiful in giving; do it but for one year, and the next, which if it should come to pass according to this the prophet saith, yea and much more abundant, then let them hold on, but if not, then for hereafter let them do as pleaseth them. But this is not against that, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,' Deut. vi., where men are forbidden to try the Lord in things not written or commanded, but here they are commanded.

*If I will not open the windows of heaven.* Namely, to make plenty, for drought made ever a dearth with them; and so he promiseth abundance of rain, which ever made plenty, *i.e.* I will send and shower down on you as much rain as if the windows of heaven were open. The manner of speech is an oath, and so set down imperfectly, and is thus to be supplied, Else account me a liar, or such like. For it is usual with the Scripture, that things which are fearful to be spoken, or carry with them blasphemy, to be silent, and let men rather conceive of them than utter them, or use some honest and comely speech.

*And pour you out a blessing.* Because the windows of heaven were once opened for a judgment, Gen. vii., and might so be again, therefore he expresseth his meaning, that it should be for a blessing, to make things prosper and fruitful, he sending them the first rain and the latter, in the earing and the harvest.

*Without measure.* The original, *that shall not suffice; i.e.* I will give you such an abundance of fruit that your garners and barns shall not suffice to contain them, as the rich man's barns did not suffice, but made him consult to make greater. Some interpret these words, 'more than enough,' as much as should suffice and more, that they should have such abundance, that there should be sufficient and more than they needed; and the more to confirm them he addeth, the next verse.

Ver. 11. *And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; neither shall your vine be barren in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.*

*And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes.* I will not only give you abundance of rain, but take from you other devourers of the fruits of the earth which it hath brought forth, meaning the caterpillar, cankerworm, grasshopper, &c., by which he did as often afflict them with famine as by want of rain. And so God destroying these devourers, they should have the fruits of the earth, and not be deceived of their hope when they looked for the fruits of the vine, for God prospering nothing shall devour. The exhortation is to pay tithes and deal faithfully to bring all unto him.

*Doct.* 1. Men ought to give to God and to his church and ministry his whole due and full right, to deal faithfully with him, and give all their tithes, as here; and all their honour, their double honour, 1 Tim. v. 15, 16, and that wholly, not in part. So much is also insinuated by that Lev. xxvii. 31, 33; the Lord would not that the Levites should gain out of other men's losses, but because the people used to make a gain craftily by turning the tithe into money, he meeteth here with their deceit, lest the Levite should lose anything of his due; which is also the reason

that God would suffer no permutation or commutation of the beast, or redemption, because then nothing that was good should have come to the Levites, no fat or well fed beast. And so he should not have had his due, because they were so griping and covetous; and so their evil manners have brought forth a good law. To these I add Prov. iii. 9, 'Honour the Lord with thy riches, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase;' Acts v.; Gal. vi. 6, 'Let him that is taught in the word make him that hath taught him partaker of all his goods.'

*Reason* 1. Because they have as much right to the one part as another, and they are bound as much to pay one as another; every part is as much theirs as one, the whole as a part. And so, though it be less injustice and robbery to keep any part than the whole, yet it is as well injustice and robbery.

*Reason* 2. Because if he labour carefully and painfully he is worthy of all, as 1 Tim. v., and that he brings for change is far more excellent, he giving greater things than he receiveth any.

*Use* 1. Reproof of many, who though they give somewhat to the minister, give him not all his due; it may be all the law ties them to for maintenance, but nothing of that the apostle calls for, honour. But if he be not a minister just of their own minds, that he answer not their conceit, as face answereth face in the water, they will hardly speak so base of any man as of him, never reverence him at all. But many for maintenance do not give him the whole, though somewhat; for whereas in most places of the land all things should be paid unto them in kind, both by the law of God and of the land, they have sought by all means to alter the course, and have prevailed so far, as they have brought upon the ministers a number of injurious customs, of paying little or nothing for that which is of good value. And although at the first this was not done without the indulgence of the minister, yet many times it happeneth that the minister, either not able to sue for his right, or not willing to disadvantage his ministry by a perpetual brawl, is forced to yield of his right both for peace and hope to do good; yet the people's offence must needs be great, that they will not yield the things themselves in kind, or the value of them. And hence it comes to pass that what the minister hath of favour once yielded unto, and for peace, they hold him thereby bound for ever, though the tithes and price of things do never so much alter. And again, against all right they bind the successor to the fact and fault of his predecessor, whereby in many things it comes to pass that where a shilling is due there cometh not a penny to the purse of the minister: as in many places there is left to the minister but twopence a cow by the year, and so much for an acre of meadow; yea, in many places nothing titheable, though men have never so great pastures and so many thousands of sheep, because abbey land, these fulfilling the iniquity of those fathers who then robbed the church for their own bellies. Of this sort should many in this city be, as the ministers do complain, who bring not all their tithe unto the Lord.

*Obj.* But they could be content to pay them if their minister were as he should be.

*Ans.* I wonder what a kind of man a minister should be that every one would think worthy of his tithes? For though to one minister some might be like them, Gal. iv. 14, 15, 'The trial of me which was in my flesh ye despised not, neither abhorred; but ye received me as an angel of God, yea, as Christ Jesus. What was then your felicity? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them unto me;' who yet afterwards changed, so do they. But that which is due is due, whatsoever he be and howsoever he deal, or how worthy or unworthy, they must deal faithfully; yet the unfaithful servant must remember that he is subject to his judgment who condemned the slothful and unprofitable servant, and cast him into utter darkness.

*Use* 2. To persuade men to deal faithfully with the Lord in bringing to him and his ministers their whole due, all the tithes; and that not only so much as the law requires, but if that be too little, a full and competent and honest maintenance, according to their proportion besides. And as to the poor, every man ought to give according to his abundance; so to the minister, specially when his charge and the times so require, else hath he not brought all his tithes to the Lord. But methinks I hear some men answering that too much is not good for a minister, and many of them grow worse by riches, idle, and proud, and negligent. And therefore, as the emperor Frederick said, *de papa et clericis*, of the pope and his clergy, so say they,* Let us take from them the riches that do hurt them, for this is a work of charity. I answer, I plead not for too much, but for a convenient maintenance. I commend them not that are worse by their abundance, yet are they men like others, and have the same infirmities; and to many of these objectors, though not to all, may I say, 'Hypocrites, pull out the beam out of your own eyes.' Who more corrupt, careless, and proud than they by their abundance? Yet would they think it a bad conclusion that they should have their riches withheld from them. But do they think the portion of tithes and the like too much for them? Haply they are unequally divided by the law; let that be remedied, and there will be found little enough. But is this too much? What think they of God's proportion, who allowed to his, not only tithes, but first-fruit and offerings, which came to no small matter? Besides, as much land as the greatest city came to, if the description of St Jerome be true, who (*ad Dardanum*) saith, that the length from Dan to Beersheba was one hundred and sixty miles, the breadth from

* Detrahamus illis nocentes divitias, hoc enim facere opus est charitatis.

Joppa to Bethlehem forty-six miles. Now the Levites' portion of land was forty-eight cities, Num. xxxv. 7. Every city had in suburbs two thousand cubits from the wall round, ver. 5, which will afford a large portion to the Levites of this land. And is it too much now for the ministers to have proportionable tenths and a little glebe? But let these men take heed lest the love of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, have not excluded the love of God our Saviour (as John), and the care of his worship and honour, and lest the envy and disdain which usually is in the world toward the ministry be in them, when they think nothing enough for themselves, to have and join house to house and land to land, till they dwell as princes of the earth alone; but if any portion be allotted to the servants of God, as a reward not only of their former studies but also of their present labours, it is thought too much; and of them who will give the lawyers freely for the maintenance of their titles and often but quarrels, and to the physician a large fee for taking care of their bodies, but the minister a small pittance for the saving of their souls; which of many make men fear they never reaped spiritual things by us, though they hear us often, because they never part with any temporal things to them, or not without grudging and repining, or but in a marvellous slack and pinching measure. The man who hath received health by his physician, and right by his lawyer, will give him both his fee and reverence; if not, they acknowledge him but slenderly. So in this. And so men stop their ears to this of the prophet. Yet for all this, think I it not tolerable that a minister should neglect the care of his flock while he hath charge of them, but strive to do it, because, 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17, 'Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to rejoice of: for necessity is laid upon me; and woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel! For if I do it willingly, I have a reward: but if I do it against my will, notwithstanding the dispensation is committed to me.' For this will not be a plea for the minister at Christ's judgment-seat, when he must give an account how he fed the flock of Christ. It may be a plea against them to condemn them, not acquit him. Therefore should it not be so; that though they keep him poor, which is their sin, he should shut peace out of his own heart, which would not be if he laboured painfully and looked to the Lord for his reward. And to say to his flock, as St Augustine to his (in Ps. cxlvi), *Decimas vis?* will you make choice to pay tithes? Then let that be my portion. And yet this is no great matter, for the pharisees, whose righteousness you ought to exceed, pay their tithes. *Tu vix millesimam das*, yet you give scarce the thousandth part. Yet if thou wilt do no more, do so still, I will find no fault; for I so thirst after your well-doing, that I refuse not your very crumbs.

*That there may be meat in my house.* Which is not, as some interpret it, that the priest and Levites might be maintained; but rather, as others, that the offerings of God might be continued, and so his worship maintained.

*Doct.* The maintaining of the ministry is a special means to further the worship of God. On the contrary, the withdrawing of that is the hindering of this. Manifest here, and that Neh. xiii. 10, 11. When the Levites were neglected, the house of God was forsaken, and that Num. xviii. 21, that they might be able to do him service, and so his worship be maintained, Prov. iii. 9; for by the paying and giving to them maintenance, is his honour procured, and that those comparisons, 1 Cor. ix., prove no less. For as the wars must needs be unfought, if the soldiers be not maintained, &c., so must God's service needs be neglected, if his ministers be not maintained.

*Reason* 1. Because the ministers else cannot, as Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 13, 'give attendance to reading,' but must needs entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, as 2 Tim. ii. 4, that is, about private affairs, and so must needs neglect the public worship of God.

*Reason* 2. Because the seed of the ministry will decay; for it is reward that nourisheth arts, and furthereth a man's study, the hope of a reward and recompence afterward. For though this should not be the end of a man's study, but the glory of God and salvation of his people, yet seeing men are not all, nor at first sanctified to have the right end; yea, and many men who never have the right end may attain the end to save others, God's end; as the builders of the ark, who never intended God's glory, or the salvation of Noah and his family; so is it in this. Therefore maintenance must be proposed, and if it fail, the work fails.

*Use* 1. This noteth unto us the vile impiety of the man of sin, the pope of Rome, who in nothing more hath sought to undermine the church, and overthrow the worship of God, than in robbing and bereaving it of the goods that belonged unto it, by impropriations, donatives, and such like. And to make way for this, he deprived the people of the worship of God, and turned the exercise of religion into a dumb and ridiculous spectacle; which done, it was thought convenient that to be a priest required no gifts, but that every common man might easily undergo the burthen of it; for if the gifts of learning had still remained as necessary, the maintenance that belongeth unto them could, under no colour, have been taken away; but when every one that was able to read his portuice was thought sufficiently furnished to that office, it easily followed that the living given to the church for the edification thereof, was thought too much, for so mean a man, in so base a labour. And another way or colour for this was, that though they were taken from the ministry, yet they were not alienated from the church, because they were not appropriated to laymen, but abbeys, friars, monasteries, and other cloisters, which

vermin began then to multiply as grasshoppers on the face of the earth, and to devour all things that were before them; and in the mean time the worship of God decayed, for those who had the spoil made an endowment of the vicarage at so low a rate by composition, namely, ten or twenty nobles, that no man of parts and gifts was able to live of it; but one that had some other trade to live by, which he followed closely; or no other means, and so he made this his last refuge. And by this means they did more overthrow the worship of God and his church, than by all the persecutions they used, or can, which they learned from their grandsire apostate Julian, who, by this means, is noted more to have overthrown the church than all the persecuting emperors before him. Because they took away *presbyters*, and their martyrs' blood was the seed of the church; but he took away *presbyterium*, the ministry, in withdrawing the maintenance from the church, and so overthrew the worship of God. In the same steps hath this his son apostate, and others his slaves, followed, by which they have made more decay of the worship of God, than by any means whatsoever.

*Use* 2. This teacheth us the cause why, in many places, the worship and service of God is not performed, or carelessly, and slubbered over, as men that work by great do their work; because the maintenance being taken away by popery, hath not yet been restored unto God's house again, and for his worship, whereby they who hold them are not only guilty of sacrilege as before, nor of theft, taking that which is proper to others; for no man hath right in tithes but they who can give, and do give, spiritual things, as Damasus, Deut. iii.* With what face, with what conscience can ye receive oblations, who can scarce for yourselves, much less for others, make prayers unto God? Speaking to laymen, but they are guilty of the hindering and overthrow of his worship, and that not only of the present hindering of it, but leaving things still alienated to their posterity, and keeping the church without hope of having them restored; they are guilty of the overthrow of the worship of God after them, so that when they are dead, yet their sins shall live.

*Use* 3. To teach men willingly and cheerfully to give to the church that which is in law and conscience due unto it; seeing by it the worship of God is maintained, and without it, it must needs decay. What ought to be more dear unto men, and wherein ought they, and should, more labour to shew themselves more cheerful and forward, than in the erecting and maintenance of the worship of God and his service, whether they consider the greatness of his majesty in himself, or what he is in respect of them? when it is so small a thing he requires of men, but the tenth, who might require all, having as much right to them as to the tenth. When he then requires so little, is it a great thing if it be given him, of them whose goods only ought not to be dear unto them, but not their lives, that they might honour him?

*And prove me herewith.* Make trial of me, of my goodness, and bountifulness in giving, and faithfulness in keeping my promise.

*Doct.* Then do men make trial of the goodness, bounty, and faithfulness of God in keeping promises, when they do the things that he requires of them, and do look for in them, and by them, the things he hath promised. They who do otherwise do but tempt him; that is, who do think to obtain his goodness though they never perform any such thing as he required. So much is implied here; and in that Deut. vi. 17, 18, 'Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye did tempt him in Massah; but ye shall keep diligently the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies, and his ordinances, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that thou mayest prosper, and that thou mayest go in and possess that good land which the Lord swear unto thy fathers.' And by that Mat. iv. 6, 7; for if it be tempting of him to seek and to look for his promise and faithfulness in things not commanded, either omitting the commanded, then *è contra*, Hag. ii. 17, 18, 'I smote you with blasting and with mildew, and with hail, in all the labours of your hands; yet you turned not to me, saith the Lord. Consider, I pray you, in your minds, from this day and afore from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it in your minds.' That is, because they had begun to build the temple, he would bless them; by that they should try his goodness, Isa. i. 18. If you will repent and do as you ought, then shall you see and try how good I will be, and Isa. vii. 11, 12.

*Reason* 1. Because it is no unfaithfulness of God, nor want of goodness and bounty, not to give, or not to perform, things he hath promised, if men do not the things he hath commanded, inasmuch as he otherwise did not bind himself. He hath made himself a debtor by his promise, but so as the condition upon which he promised be performed; but this not performed, no man can expect that, and so without it can they not make trial of his goodness and fidelity.

*Reason* 2. Because it is no faithfulness nor goodness of God to give things that he hath promised as blessings, to those who do not the things he requires for them, but is rather the anger and displeasure, *magna est ira Dei peccatoribus non irasci* (St Jerome). And that Hos. iv. 14. And so to bless them and give them the things he hath promised, they not performing, is a hurt to them, and a curse rather than a blessing.

*Use* 1. Then have we many more tempters of God than religious triers of his faithfulness and goodness; seeing most men make account of and promise to themselves to find the faithfulness of God, though they never do the things he requires they should do, but

* Quâ fronte, quâ conscientiâ &c.—*Damasus, in* Deut. iii.

rather the clean contrary; for whereas he hath promised all earthly blessings to such as fear him and keep his commandments, Lev. xxiv. 1, howsoever they have cast off his fear and the care of his commandments, yet they doubt not but to enjoy his blessings; and they will put him to the trial whether he will be his word's master or no, and make no doubt but to find him performing these to them; and often when they enjoy some of these things promised, it may be in a plentiful measure, their deceitful hearts flatter them that they come from the faithfulness of God and his goodness, though they never did the things he required to be done. And as in earthly things, so in spiritual things, and matters of salvation, they no less tempt God, because they persuade themselves to have and obtain remission of their sins though they never repent; to have salvation though they live in blindness, ignorance, and infidelity, or unbelief, though he had promised none of these, but upon condition that they know him, and believe, and repent, John xvii. 3, and iii. 16, Acts ii. 38. Must not these then tempt God and not try him? Had not Christ tempted him, when there was an ordinary way, if he had taken the extraordinary at the suggestion of Satan, because of God's promise? Should not they tempt him, if, when they should pass over the water, upon some man's suggestion they should refuse the bridge or boat, and leap into the water, because he hath promised to give his angels? &c. It will be granted; yet because the Lord hath appointed an ordinary, and the promise is only in their ways, that is, doing that he hath commanded; is it not then so in this? And if in those kinds they can look for no performance of his faithfulness, why in this? but that they are deluded by Satan and their corruption, and as fools led to the stocks, and as oxen to the slaughter.

*Use* 2. Seeing God hath put himself and his faithfulness upon their trial, and is so content that they do not tempt him, but try him; that is, they look for his goodness and fidelity when they perform that he requires of them; for till then they have made no trial of him, but tempted him, and if he perform not, then cannot they blame him; nay, they must blame themselves; for if they had not forsaken him, and been wanting to themselves, he would never have been wanting to them.

*If I will not open the windows of heaven.* The blessing promised as the second reason, to make them to bring tithes into his house, and not to withhold the portion of his ministers, then he will give them plenty.

*Doct.* The Lord he will bless with plenty and abundance all such as deal faithfully with him, and give to his church and ministers liberally and plentifully, and give unto them their due and competent maintenance. So much is affirmed here, no less is laid down: Prov. iii. 9, 10, 'Honour the Lord with thy riches, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with abundance, and thy presses shall burst with new wine.' Hag. ii. 20, Deut. xxvi. 12, 13, 15. God would not bid them pray for a plentiful blessing but that he meant to give it them, for their bounty to him and his Levites.

*Reason* 1. Because of that, Mat. xxv. 40, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto these, ye have done it unto me,' is true in this. Now such is the magnificence and greatness of his mind, that he will give much more than he received; as princes, in the greatness of their minds, give manifold more than they receive, much more will God, even an hundredfold.

*Reason* 2. Because it is a special means for upholding and maintaining of his worship and service; because it enables the present ministers to follow their studies with cheerfulness and with freedom of mind, and encourageth others, that are the seed of the ministry, to go forward with their studies, that there may be still men to preach the gospel. Then no marvel if he promise and will perform a blessing to those who shall do it.

*Reason* 3. Because the ministry of the word and the labour of the ministers is for the good and nourishment of the soul, and for the making of it every day more and more like unto him, the renewing of the image of him, and the making of men his, and every day more and more like unto him, James i. 18. Now when men are careful to have their souls made his, and made like to him, and will be liberal that way, which argues their care, he will be liberal to them, and for their bodies.

*Use* 1. This serves to meet with the covetous distrustfulness and distrustful covetousness of many, who grudge and repine to give unto the ministers that due and portion which belongs unto them of their goods, specially if they be not able, as the rich men in the gospel, to give of their abundance and superfluity, they will part with nothing of their poverty, at least not willingly, not freely, and all because they distrust the Lord; think that they have is little enough for themselves; and look what they give, they think so much lost, and so much diminished of their substance, thinking, as it were, they have cast their bread upon the waters, and their seed not in any firm ground, but in some puddle, where it should be choked, and they never see the fruit of it. It seems that this was the sin of this people, that when penury was, they held from the Levites their tithes, which makes the prophet thus to speak to them and their sin also, Neh. xiii. 10, 11; distrusting the Lord, that if they gave anything to him and his, then they should want, not believing the Lord and his word; worse than the heathen, Gen. xlvii. 22, whose priests had a portion assigned them in the greatest scarcity; and than idolaters, 1 Kings xviii. 19. Jezebel fed four hundred false prophets at her table, whereas they contrary, which must needs come from covetousness, making a man diffident that they shall never be the better or the richer at the year's end, but so much the poorer.

*Use* 2. To persuade men to give unto the Levites and ministers all their due; that is, a competent maintenance among them, if not for any love to them, yet for the love of themselves; if for no other reason, yet for their own gain. If all the things spoken before can move; if not, that which Chrysostom speaketh (in Ps. ii. hom. 9), that any man would be ashamed to be the disciple of a beggarly master, and so, while they are kept too too bare, the credit and honour of their ministry, yea, the fruit, is hindered. If thy father of thy body and flesh should be so bare, wouldst thou not be ashamed at it? And if thy spiritual father be driven unto it, dost thou not, for very shame, hide thyself, or else put to thy hand to take that shame both from him and thee? Or if this move thee not, will not that which he speaks in 1 Tim. ii.? See, I pray you, how great absurdity there is of these things. Should the pastor not be able to keep a man to tend upon him, so that he must make his own fire himself, and fetch water, break his sticks for his fire, and go often to the market for things necessary, can there be a greater perversity or greater disorder? Those holy men, the apostles, thought it an unmeet thing that he which should attend upon the word should be employed so much as to the service of the poor widows. Finally, if this do not move thee, the good of thy soul, and the spiritual and heavenly things, such rich treasures these earthen vessels do bring unto thee, yet let this, that if thou wilt give God his tenth, he will increase and multiply thy ninth,* even in abundant measure; as Augustine speaketh, that thou shalt not only reap by them better things, spiritual things, for a few earthly, but for them from God abundance of earthly things, for that shall be true, Prov. xi. 25, 'The liberal person shall have plenty, and he that watereth shall also have rain;' and that 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7, 'This yet remember, that he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth liberally shall reap also liberally. As every man wisheth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.' Neither let them answer as the widow did to Elijah: 1 Kings xvii. 12, 'And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but even a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering a few sticks for to go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' Or if thou dost distrustfully so a while, yet seeing thou hast the word of God here more than she had, ver. 14, 'The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail,' then believe and give. Verily, if this be true the prophet saith here, many men might have more than they have, if they had for the glory of God, for the service of the church, and the work of the ministry, more liberal hearts than they have. Verily, it is an evil spared penny that loseth a man a pound; and that which men think they have spared to themselves, and gained in keeping it from God and his ministers, either the prophet saith not true, or it loseth them much more. Nay, that they give, though they may seem to have cast it away, yet they shall find it, and with advantage; and if they had eyes to see it, nothing more gainful than this, and that is given to the poor. Then as Chrysostom for one, let me apply it and speak of both (*hom.* 53, *ad pop. Antioch.*): So use thy riches, or that which thou hast, that they may bring increase: let God then be thy creditor, not other human things; bestow them upon the ministers and the poor, not upon thy belly; upon the humble, not honourable; upon liberality, not covetousness; upon sobriety, not intemperance. What will thy belly afford and recompense thee with, that spendeth most? Dung and corruption. What vain glory? Envy and hatred. What covetousness? Care and grief. What intemperance? Hell and the insatiable worm. Let God then be your creditor, which promiseth and will perform such great things. And as Paul exhorteth the Corinthians for the matter of the poor, so I for the Levite and minister: 2 Cor. viii. 7, 'Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and word, and knowledge, and all diligence, and in your love toward us, even so see that ye abound in this grace also.'

*I will open the windows of heaven, and pour you out,* &c. It is the rain that is the means, but God is the author of the blessing.

*Doct.* Whatsoever the means may be that God doth use to convey his blessings of peace, plenty, health, liberty, yet he is the author and giver, Isa. xxxviii. 6.

*And pour you out a blessing.* You that shall obey me, and fear me, and walk in my ways,

*Doct.* Plenty, and a liberal and prosperous estate, the Lord promiseth, and will perform, to those who fear him, and are careful to obey him, and walk in his ways. *Vide* Mal. ii. 5.

*Without measure.* In marvellous great abundance, and very liberally.

*Doct.* The Lord, when he gives to his, he gives very liberally and abundantly: James i. 5, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and reproacheth no man, and it shall be given him.'

*And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes.* If the Lord should give rain in abundance, and by it should rise weeds, that should either choke the corn, or other creatures which commonly arise of wet, or by any other means, and so devour their fruit, and their hopes be cut off, they should but have little profit or benefit; that what was given one way was taken away another; therefore the Lord promiseth to take away such devourers, such creatures as might destroy the fruit of the earth when it was sprung up.

*Doct.* Every creature is at God's command, at his beck, to be restrained or set on, to help or hurt, to punish or preserve, those who are his. *Vide* chap. i. 4, 'Lord of hosts.'

* Qu. 'nine'?—ED.

*And they shall not destroy the fruit of your ground.* For their sins and iniquities they have destroyed it, but now that they are received into favour and mercy, they shall not; but receiving them to mercy will withdraw his judgments from these things he smote for them.

*Doct.* As God often punisheth men, punisheth them not only in themselves, but in things that belong unto them, so when he withdraweth his hand, and sheweth mercy towards them, it is not only in themselves, but in things which belong unto them, Isa. xxxviii. 6, Micah vii. 11.

*Reason* 1. Because, that as his hand was against them for man's cause only, seeing they in themselves deserved no such thing, as being not subject to, nor capable of, sin, which only falleth into a reasonable creature, so he receiving them to mercy, for whose sake they were afflicted, reason that they also should be received, and afflicted no more; that as the former might humble them, so this might joy them the more in the mercy of God.

*Reason* 2. Because, as by smiting and cursing of them, he testified his anger the more and displeasure against them for their sins;—for as in policy, when justice reacheth further than the person of the offender to his goods and possessions, it argues the greater displeasure of the lawyer against such an offence and offender; so in this;—so he might now shew his love more in blessing of them; for when men have their possessions and lands restored, besides their pardon, it is a greater favour of the prince.

*Use* 1. Then hath the popish purgatory but an uncertain ground to stand upon, and is builded upon no sure rock, but upon the sand, seeing it is only for a temporal punishment, in their doctrine, upon those who have their sins forgiven them already; but may we suppose in any reason that God will take from their goods, and lands, and cattle, his judgments for their sakes, and not from them, their own persons, specially their souls (such as are only punished in purgatory), their punishments? But they will say that God doth often continue punishments to men, and upon their persons, whom he hath received to mercy; as they will tell us of David, who had the punishment continued when his sin was pardoned. But we deny that or any other to be a punishment, for that hath ever reference to sin; for all afflictions are not punishments, but may for many other causes be laid upon men. Chrysostom (*Hom.* 1, *ad popul. Antioch.*) hath numbered to us eight causes, yet are they not all:* first, God suffers holy men to be afflicted, because otherwise they soon grow proud of the greatness of their merits and miracles; secondly, lest others might have a greater opinion of them than is fit, and count them gods rather than men; thirdly, that God's power may appear more abundantly and beyond words through the weak and unable; fourthly, that their patience also may be manifest; fifthly, that we may be put in mind of the resurrection; for when we see a righteous and virtuous man suffer many evils, and so die, this must offer us some thoughts of the day of judgment; for if a man suffer not any, that have taken pains for him, to go away without recompence and reward, much less will God suffer such as have endured so much for him to remain uncrowned; sixthly, that all that fall into calamities may have sufficient consolation and mitigation, looking on them, and remembering what they endured; seventhly, that when we exhort you to their virtues, and say to you, Imitate Paul, imitate Peter, you may not be slothful to imitate them, thinking because of their great actions they were partakers of some other nature than you are of; eighthly, that we may be able to judge aright who are indeed happy, and who truly calamitous and miserable. To these may be added, ninthly, for clearing of his own justice, as in David; tenthly, for purging yet corruption from them, the rod of correction; eleventhly, to draw them from the world, the nurse's teat, as the prodigal son was; twelfthly, to prevent sin, like Hosea's hedge, Hosea ii. 6; thirteenthly, to make them fly to God, and to love him, as the child to his mother when feared of passengers. And many other such causes, any one whereof, if they can shew in purgatory to be incident to the souls departed, it were something to strengthen their exception, but nothing to prove the thing, whenas the pains of purgatory are satisfactory. And if God, in shewing mercy and pardoning sin, doth remove the punishment from the creatures he smote for their sin, he will much more from themselves, their bodies, but especially from their souls.

*Neither shall their vine be barren in the field.* This is added, as some think, to amplify the goodness of God to his people, when they had returned, and he had received them to mercy, because the year which was commodious for the field and the corn was incommodious for the trees and the vines. There-

* 1. Quod cum facile in arrogantiam propter meritorum magnitudinem et miraculorum tollantur, ipsos sinit affligi. 2. Ne cæteri majorem habeant de ipsis opinionem, quam humana patitur natura et ipsos deos non autem homines esse arbitrentur. 3. Ut et Dei virtus apparet per ægrotantes et compeditos, exsuperans et prodicationem augens. 4 Ut illorum patientia manifesti fiat. 5. Ut de resurrectione cogitemus, cum enim virum justum et multa plenum virtute innumera passum mala, et sic hinc digressum videris, oportet ex hoc omnino aliquid de illo judicio cogitare; si enim homo pro se laborantes sine præmiis et retributione abire non permittit, multo magis eos, qui tantum laboraverunt, nunquam incoronatos remanere Deus decerneret. 6. Ut omnes in gravia incidentes, sufficientem consolationem et mitigationem habeant in eos respicientes, et malorum quæ ipsis accidere recordantes. 7. Ne quando exhortamur eos ad illorum virtutem, et cuique dicimus, imitare Paulem, imitare Petrum, propter gestorum excessum alterius ipsos naturæ participes fuisse cogitantes, ad imitationem torpeatis. 8. Ut quando beatos, vel miseros censere oportet, discamus quos quidem beatos, quos quidem miseros et ærumnosos putare debeamus.—*Chrys. hom.* 1 *ad popul. Antioch.*

fore when all things should prosper well, it was a special proof of the goodness of God, and his good providence over them.

*Doct.* The Lord, to shew his goodness and mercy, his good and merciful providence to his, will not only work ordinary things, and ordinarily, but often extraordinarily to do them good, and to profit them. Manifested here that he will make both the harvest and vintage good, which in ordinary times fell not out, and all for the good of his. So he made the sea as a wall, and dry land for his people to pass over, Exod. xiv. 21; so the sun was stayed in his course, Josh. x. 12, 13; nay, made to go back, Isa. xxxviii. 8; so he fed the prophet by a raven, and for his good increased the widow's meal and oil, 1 Kings xvii. 6–14; so for the relieving of the famine of his, 2 Kings vii. 6, &c.; for some he quenched the violence of the fire, Dan. iii.; for some, stopped the mouth of the lions, Dan. vi.; for others, he raised their dead to life, as in Lazarus and the Shunammite, 2 Kings iv. 36. How many wonders wrought he in Egypt for his people, how wonderfully did he sustain them in the wilderness! And hereto I apply that, Isa. lix. 16.

*Reason* 1. Because it maketh his goodness and mercy more sensible to his own, who being compassed with infirmities, as they have less sense and feeling of it in small things than in great matters, so in ordinary than in extraordinary; whenas without question, as his power was no less in creating a little bee than a great lion, as the clockmaker's skill in a little watch as in a great clock, so his goodness in the smallest and most ordinary as in the greatest and most extraordinary.

*Reason* 2. Because his power might be more manifested and magnified unto all men, who oftentimes in ordinary things give more to the means than they ought, and less to the Lord than his due, yet in extraordinary are driven to give him the whole, if they acknowledge him at all.

*Use* 1. This may note out unto us the happy condition of God's children and people, when not only ordinary means must work for their good, but rather than they should quail, God will make extraordinary things for them, if ordinary things be not enough to procure their good. The psalmist sheweth that they are blessed, for whom the ordinary things work to their good: Ps. cxliv. 12–15, 'That our sons may be as plants growing up in their youth; and our daughters as the corner-stones, graven after the similitude of a palace; that our corners may be full and abounding with divers sorts; and that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets; that our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be none invasion, nor going out, nor no crying in our streets. Blessed are the people that be so; yea, blessed are people whose God is the Lord.' But addeth more specially that their blessing is to have the Lord for their God, who, if this be not enough, can, moreover, do such and such things for them, far beyond the ordinary course of things. It is a happy condition for subjects when they may have under a prince ordinary favour and benefits, and the due course of laws, and the proceedings in them, for the righting of their wrongs, the procuring of their rights, maintenance and countenance of their peace and state; but the condition is accounted the better when the prince will use his prerogative to procure extraordinary things for them. So in this, specially when this shall not be, (as often falls out with some prince's prerogatives), prejudicial to others, but for their sakes profit others. As the extraordinary giving of the host water, 2 Kings iii. 14–17; and that which Tertullian hath (*Apol. adversus gentes*). Marcus Aurelius, in his war against the Germans, his army being destitute of water, by the prayers of the Christians he procured that it should not perish with thirst, they obtained rain from God.

*Use* 2. This may be matter of comfort unto those who are indeed God's, truly reconciled unto him, and partakers of his mercy, when they know, that rather than their good should not be procured, if ordinary means be not sufficient, the Lord will work extraordinarily: not that it warrants any to neglect ordinary means, for that were to tempt God, or to expect for extraordinary while God affords ordinary, for that were presumption and not faith; but when they fail, then to rely upon this. They shall then shew themselves the children of the believing Abraham, if with him they answer and appease their souls, as he his son, Gen. xxii. 8, God will give an evasion, 'God will provide;' and as Moses to the people in a strait: Exod. xiv. 13, 'Then Moses said to the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and behold the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you this day. For the Egyptians whom ye have seen this day, ye shall never see them again.' For he hath done it before, and his arm is not shortened, nor his affections to his changed. If then he dealt so with Abraham, with Israel, with the church in Esther's days, they may expect the like, provided they be to him as they were, and it be for his own glory and their good, as that was. And if they be, then may they more expect it, because it will be more for his glory; because the means, by man's corruption, often obscureth and shadoweth his glory, men attributing more to them than is due, and less to God than is his right.

Ver. 12. *And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a pleasant land, saith the Lord of hosts.*

*And all nations shall call you blessed.* The second benefit that shall come to them in obeying God, and bringing his tithes into his house; a good name, and honour, and estimation. In former times, ye were in contempt among the heathen and barbarous, because of your poverty, and want, and penury, with which I had cursed you, for not bringing my tithes; but now,

when they shall see the blessing increased upon you, they shall say, seeing your plenty, that you are a people dear and beloved of me.

*For ye shall be a pleasant land.* St Jerome would have it *a land desired*, for the fruit and plenty of it. But why *ye*, and not *it?* It is the Hebrew phrase, giving to the possessors that which is proper to the earth. As Deut. xxviii. 3, 'Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed also in the field.' For it is the field that is blessed with increase; but some think the sense will be more plain, if you understand, *as*, 'ye shall be *as* a pleasant land;' that is, flourishing and prospering, and abounding with riches.

*Doct.* The Lord will bless with honour and credit all such as deal faithfully with him, and give to his church and ministers liberally their due and competent maintenance. So much is promised here, and so much was performed to Obadiah, 1 Kings xviii. 13; to the widow of Sarepta, chap. xvii. 15; and to the Shunammite, 2 Kings iv. 8. For to this may we apply that Mat xxvi. 13, 'Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout all the world, there shall also this that she hath done be spoken of for a memorial of her.' This is that Nehemiah had, and prayed for: Nehemiah xiii. 14, 'Remember me, O my God, herein, and wipe not out the kindness that I have shewed on the house of my God, and on the offices thereof.'

*Reason.* Because by this they honour the messengers of God, 1 Tim. v. 17. And by the contrary, poverty makes contemptible, as in the magistrate, so in the ministry. Now if princes honour those who honour their followers and special favourites, much more will God.

*Reasons* 2 and 3. *Vide* 1 and 2, in the promise of plenty.

*Use* 1. If this be so, that honour is their due from the Lord, who honour him in his ministers, what honour can they look for, who think everything well gained that is got and kept from the church? and think it well spared when they have pared them of anything, making them contemptible by poverty, and contemning them when they have done, and bring the contempt of many others upon them; for by want they either preach not, or they preach unfaithfully, pleasing and not wholesome, toothsome, not saving things, and either will bring contempt upon them, and so utterly hindering the glory of God and the salvation of his people. Do they think then to have honour of God? Many can be content to entertain ministers in their houses, at their tables, specially strangers, rather than their own painful pastors, but with Saul's humour, 1 Sam. xv. 30, not to give them honour, but to honour themselves. Many are heard glorying that they have a minister in their house, and they give him twenty pound or thirty pound *per annum*, when their hearts tell them that they deprive him of eighty, as due to him as the rest, they enjoying the impropriation, being a thing, for aught I can see, under correction of the law, against right or reason; both in respect of the people, that they should have their tithes for nothing, performing no duty or service unto them; and in respect of the minister, who doth the labour, and they enjoy his wages. And these men think to be honoured before the people for them, and by them; but if that be due to such as deal liberally with them, which is rather in giving them more than their own, than in keeping anything back from them; if they by this dishonour them, let them look for dishonour from him, when they thus provoke him. If the prince be offended to see one of his common soldiers disgraced, and pinched of their wages, if one of his guard and nigh attendance, wherein the safety of his person consisteth, his anger would exceedingly be kindled; but if his son, saith Cyril, I would apply it, if himself, his own homage and tribute denied him, would he honour such?

*Use* 2. To persuade men to give unto the ministers, who watch over them and for them when they sleep, and study for them when they play, and weep for them when they laugh, and in all things, and by all means seek their salvation and good; to give them, I say, their due and competent maintenance, if other things move them not. If the commodity and profit promised do not move them, yet this, that is better than riches and gold, and to be desired above it, Prov. xxii. 1.

*All nations shall call you blessed.* They should be honourable and famous for their outward prosperity. Besides the general doctrine, we may observe some particulars.

*Doct.* The Lord sometime makes his church famous and honourable in the eyes of the world and wicked men, for outward peace, and prosperity, and plenty, as here is promised. So was it with this people, for the most part, in the days of Joshua and divers of the judges; then their victories and taking the land, here their often deliverances, and forty years' peace and plenty together; witness the books of Judges. In the times of David and Solomon his son, that they came from far to see the plenty and prosperity; and so of divers others of the kings' times. Amongst other that is specially markable, and of special note, when they were in captivity, yet for deliverance famous: Esther viii. 17, 'In all and every province, and in all and every city and place, where the king's commandment and his decree came, there was joy and gladness to the Jews, a feast and good day; and many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.'

*Reason* 1. Because God hath promised such things unto them while they fear him, and walk in his ways, and keep his ordinances and judgments; therefore they doing, he will not be wanting.

*Reason* 2. Because wicked men should see that which they will hardly confess, that even in this life there is a reward for the righteous, or to shew his power in

preserving it, as Moses's bush :* while it is persecuted, it flourishes; while it is contemned, it increases; while it is wronged, it overcomes; while it is oppressed, it grows; and then stands when it seems thrown down. Now, in this I say the Lord doth oftentimes thus bless his church, not always; for even under the law, when this was more specially promised [than] to them under the gospel, and when they were led more by these because of their childhood and infirmity, they had them not always, then less under the gospel. Besides, Jer. xii. 1, Ps. lxxiii., 2 Tim. iii. 12, John xvi. 20, 33, Heb. xi., Israel in Egypt, in Canaan by Philistines, Ammonites, Midianites, Babylonians, Persians. The primitive church for three hundred years after Christ, after it was persecuted by the Arians, Goths, Vandals, yea, after that it had Christian princes, yea, and much misery the church hath felt from the Turks; all which shews this is but sometime, not always. This may be because it is with the church, as Salvian once complained.† The very church of God, which in all things ought to please God and to appease him, what is it or doth it else but embitter or provoke him, or besides a very few who fly from evil? What is almost the whole society of Christians, any other but a very sink of sins?

*Use* 1. Against the dream of Anabaptists, who think a man cannot be a religious man and a rich man, but that one overthrows the other. It is true. It often falls out by the corruption of men, that, as the lean kine devoured the fat in Pharaoh's dream, so in this; and that the mother is devoured of the daughter; but yet this sentence and opinion must needs condemn all the generation of God's children, who sometimes have had such abundance, plenty, and prosperous estate. And that which hath been may be; for as there is no new thing under the sun, so nothing hath been but it may be renewed.

*Use* 2. This will confute the doctrine of popery, making this a note of the church; for, being but sometimes befalling it, it cannot note the church, which is certainly known only by such things as are inseparable, which this is not, being oftener under persecution than in prosperity; and how otherwise, seeing here it is but a stranger and sojourner, compared to a dove lodged in the rocks, Cant. ii. 14, to a ship shaken with the winds but not sunk, to a house upon the rock beaten with wind and weather, but not cast down? Therefore is it but a weak argument which Bellarmine, Sadolet, Stapleton, and others use to prove the true church, and to deny ours to be, and indeed no other than that which the heathen and pagans have used against Christians. Symmachus, against whom Prudentius writ in an epistle to Theodosius the emperor, which is in Ambrose, Epist. 30, used this argument, and almost no other, to prove that the emperor should still abide in the religion of the Romans, because that commonwealth was most flourishing and prosperous so long as they worshipped Jupiter, Apollo, and other gods. Also the old tyrants, persecutors of the church, were wont to impute to chance the cause of all calamities and miseries; for they used to say when calamities were upon them, We are now less fortunate than in former times, because we suffer the Christians, and because we do not with that religion and devotion worship Jupiter, and other of the gods, as we did before; therefore are the gods angry with us. So the papists, from a temporal felicity, measure piety, and gather that God doth favour them, because he gives them these outward things; by it would condemn us and all other churches. But if the heathen reasoned absurdly, they conclude not well, but very impudently; but, if the conclusion would follow, it would be on our sides rather than theirs, who have for these forty-eight years not been inferior to any kingdom in the world for peace, plenty, and prosperity, and specially when we have been most severe, not in persecuting, but correcting, of their impieties and idolatries (for *pro justitiâ persequentes persecutores sunt, propter flagitium correctores*, Augustine *contra lit Petil.*, lib. xxi. cap. 84.) And for victory in war, which is the principallest they stand of, we have given them more foils than ever they us, and have often carried the day and triumph, both by sea and land, blessed be our God for it. Therefore must they let this argument, this weapon, go, or else we will sheathe it in their own sides.

*Use* 3. If this be a blessing, then have we cause to stir up ourselves and souls to God to give him thanks for that he hath performed to us, which he promised to this land and people; that we have had such peace, plenty, and prosperity, as we have been accounted of all blessed and happy, and of our enemies mightily maligned and envied; that we use that of Augustine (*de Civit. Dei*, l. i. c. 7), *Quisquis non videt, cæcus; quisquis nec laudat, ingratus; quisquis laudanti reluctat, is insanus est.* And yet, seeing it is no perpetual blessing, but such as the church is often deprived of, and hath been, let us see we walk worthy of it, lest he pull us down as low as he lifted us up high, and make us as vile as he hath made us honourable, as he did divers times with his people, Deut. xxix. 22, 24, 25, which was then, and shall be, when they are worse and walk unworthy of this, and we be, as Salvian (*ad Catholicam Ecclesiam*, lib. i.). I know not how, but thy felicity fights against thyself; so much as thou art increased in people, thou art almost as much increased in vices; by how much thou hast more abounded, thou hast lost in discipline, and thy prosperity hath brought with it a great increase of evils; for the professors of the faith being multiplied, the faith itself is lessened, and her children increasing, the mother is sick, and thou, O church of God, art made weaker by thy fruitfulness; and the more children, the less strength; for thou hast spread through the whole world the professors of thy religious name, but not having the power of religion,

* Dum persequitur floret, dum, &c.—*Hilar. de Trinit.*, cap. 7.

† Ipsa Dei ecclesia quæ, &c.—*Salvian D.*, lib. 3, *de Imber.*

as if thou wert rich in men, poor in faith, wealthy in multitude, needy in devotion, enlarged in body, strengthened in spirit, &c.

Ver. 13. *Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee?*

*Your words have been stout against me.* Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord of hosts. The prophet proceedeth to reprove this people of another sin, and to expostulate the thing with them. The sin of it is the denying of God's providence, both over the evil and good; not punishing the one, and not providing for the other. This people, afflicted of God with penury and want for other of their sins, but especially for spoiling God, his Levites, and church, they thought and spoke blasphemously against God; but accusing his providence, as not regarding those who worship and profess him, but such as dishonoured him, and were wicked, and never would they accuse themselves of their sins, which is that he saith, their words have been great against him, they spoke hard and odious things of him, as the words following shew that these were they.

*Yet ye say, What have ye spoken against thee?* They answer for themselves, not denying simply that they had spoken any such thing, but putting God to his proof, as thinking that he did not know nor understand, as those who had oftentimes said among themselves that God regarded not the things here below, neither took notice of what men did; therefore this question of theirs tendeth not to any denial of the deed, but to the tempting of God; for if he could not or did not answer directly, and shew them what they had said, then would they conclude, as before they had, that he did not regard nor understand the things that were said and done by men, which, if he did, then could he tell in particular what words they had spoken against him, and not thus insist in the general.

*Your words have been stout.* Observe,

*Doct.* God takes notice of the words of men as well as their actions, and will reprove them for them, and call them to an account and judge them, James ii. 12.

*Your words have been stout against me.* They deny the providence of God, and his wise disposing of things upon earth among men, as the verses following shew; and so are accused to have spoken against God himself, though they have not denied him or blasphemed him.

*Doct.* They who deny the providence of God, and his governing of things here below, do speak proudly and wickedly against God, specially if they deny his providence and government in disposing the states and affairs of men. This is the sin these are challenged withal. Such was that which we have, Ps. lxxiii. 11, 'And they say, How doth God know it? or is there knowledge in the Most High?' If it be referred to the 10th verse, it is the infirmity of God's people; if to the 9th, it is the pride of the wicked: in either, it is a sin against God. And that Ps. xciv. 4–7, 'They prate and speak fiercely; all the workers of iniquity vaunt themselves; they smite down thy people, O Lord, and trouble thine heritage; they slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless; yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither will the God of Jacob regard it.' Such were they, Zeph. i. 12, 'And at that time will I search Jerusalem with lights, and visit the men that are frozen in their dregs, and say in their hearts, The Lord will neither do good nor do evil.' Job xxii. 13, 14, 'But thou sayest, How should God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? The clouds hide him that he cannot see, and he walketh in the circle of heaven.' Ezek. ix. 9, 'Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, so that the land is full of blood, and the city full of corrupt judgment; for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth us not.'

*Reason* 1. Because God doth challenge these things unto himself, the Scripture giveth it unto him: Isa. xlv. 6, 7; Prov. xv. 3, 'The eyes of the Lord in every place, behold the evil and the good.' Ps. xxviii. 18, 19, and xxxiv. 15, 16. Then without sin this cannot be denied, which were to give God and his truth the lie.

*Reason* 2. Because, by denying this, they deny the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God; for seeing God hath created the world, and all things, specially men, how should he be wise, if he knew not; how omnipotent, if he could not; how good, if he would not, regard and govern the things and men he had made? For who would account him a good father of a family, who, when he can, and knows well how to govern and dispose of the children he hath begotten, and of the house he hath erected, and his whole family, yet will not, but neglects them? And when they deny this of God, do they not deny his goodness?

*Use* 1. Then have we many proud speakers, many that utter stout words against the Lord; for we have many, and too many, who deny the providence of God, some in one thing, some in another, some after one manner, some after another: some deny any providence at all, some affirm it only to be in heavenly things; some, if in earthly things, then but in great matters, and about the greatest creatures, not the smallest; if in man for the general, not in the particular actions and affairs of men. These are all speakers against God, when the word and reason witnesseth of him, that his providence is over all these; as in general, Ps. cxiii. 5, 6; in great things, Prov. xvi. 9, xxi. 1; in particular actions, Jer. x. 23, Acts xvii. 28; in smaller, Job xxxviii. 3, Mat. vi. 26, 28, and x. 50; and many other of the like kind; beside reason, as that the world doth so long continue, that the heavens still keep their certain and perpetual motion, that there are interchanging of things, and as

the day succeeding of the night, and the winter of the summer; that the earth being founded upon the waters, and compassed about with it, and yet it neither sinketh nor is overflowed. Will not all these prove his providence? Specially when they are created of nothing, when many things are compounded of contraries, and by a natural enmity seek the ruin, and would wreck one another. For they must needs be preserved of some other, but of none but God; for who else is able to sustain, to rule and govern, so great a mass, and so infinite creatures, but an infinite power? To deny them this, is to speak against God himself; of which all these are guilty, either out of the dulness of their brains, as being not able to comprehend greater things than are before their eyes, and which may be groped and felt; or else out of the wickedness and corruption of their hearts, who living wickedly and filthily, lest the continual remembrance of this should vex and disquiet them, and the perpetual fear of punishment torment them, they frame his comfort to themselves. As children, when they have offended, could wish and desire they had neither a father at home, nor a master at school; and these persuade them so it is with themselves.

*Use* 2. This may teach men to take heed how they deny or call into question the providence of God, lest they be found fighters and speakers against God, and that proudly and contemptuously. For what if they cannot see God, how he doth it? yet seeing they see it is done, and the world and all things in it governed after a marvellous manner, they ought to believe it is so. If a man shall see a ship coming sailing into the haven, or standing upon the shore, see it go along upon the sea, and often sailing prosperously in the midst of great tempests, though he see never a mariner, never a master and pilot, yet he doubts not but he is there; or, as Gregory Nazianzen, if thou hear a harp sound of divers strings, and all keep one harmony, thou wilt conceive of one that strikes them, though thou see him not; so in the government of the world. Yea, when they cannot see the reason of things that are done, yet men ought to admire the wisdom of God. As in states, men do give more to the wisdom of those which hold and sit at the stern, and govern the state, that they think well of things done and projected, though they see not the reason, nay, when their reason is contrary. Finally, well and with good reason may they imagine, that if a father will govern his house, and a king will not forsake his kingdom, God will much more govern the world, and not forsake it. And if a ship, though well built and strong (as Chrysostom), cannot be preserved in the sea without a governor, no, not a day in the midst of the waves, nor the body separated from the soul, how should this be? All which may keep us from denying the providence of God, and so speaking against God.

Ver. 14. *Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his commandment, and that we walked humbly before the Lord of hosts?*

*Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God.* The prophet's replication in the person of God, shewing them wherein they had profanely and impiously spoken against God; and this their impiety consisted herein, that they said it was a needless and fruitless thing to serve the Lord, and that a man's labour should be in vain that should busy himself about it, and restrain himself of other things, of his pleasure and profit; and they affirm it to be a needless work, both in respect of God, who was to be worshiped, and in respect of those who should worship him. For the first, some understand these words, *i. e.* God is far above man, neither hath commerce with him; if ye have, yet God hath no need of these things which men possess, neither doth he desire; he is not affected nor bettered by the worship of men. Then is it in vain and foolish for men to bestow their pains and labours in those things which never help nor profit him they do them for. Now these things profit not God, therefore they are vain in respect of him.

*And what profit is it, that we have kept his commandments?* Their second proof they have in speaking thus against God, because it is not profitable to men who worship and serve him; and first, they deny it any ways profitable to do the good God hath commanded, and that there is not with him any reward for well-doing. And secondly, that it is as little profitable to abstain from evil, and that we have walked humbly before him, which is (as I take it), not to be understood of that humiliation which is in repentance, as some think; but as some others, it describeth one who, having piety and the fear of God before his eyes, neither hurteth any man, and being hurt of others, doth not violently revenge himself, but rather suffereth all things, than proudly doth anything, and commit their cause to God as the just revenger, knowing that vengeance is his; to which purpose they understand those words, 'before the Lord of hosts,' that is, before God the revenger. And so they account the observation of piety and religion not profitable to men, as that which did not make the worshippers prosperous, nor keep them from injuries, nor defend them grieved. And of both these they give themselves for instance, and speak out of experience, that they had found none, and so challenging themselves to be just, religious, and godly, and so endeavoured their own honour, and to detract from the providence of God and his worship; and it is worth the noting, that they produce not others of the godly, but themselves. For the first might easily have been refuted, either by producing the examples of those who have had testimony of their piety from God, and where they enjoyed his blessings; or else by answering them, that neither they, nor any other, were able certainly to judge whether those they named did truly and sincerely worship God or no, and embrace piety; for no man can be a certain witness of

another's conscience; his own he may well know; therefore these brought not forth others against God, but themselves.

*Doct.* The misery, poverty, affliction, and adversity of the children and church of God, and the prosperity of the wicked, makes men out of their ignorance or corruption, out of their infirmity or malice, to deny or doubt of the providence of God. *Vide* chap. ii. ver. 14, *Doct. ult. Proof., Reason and Use* 1.

*Use.* To teach us to suspect our conceit or judgment when it carries us that way, to question and reason about God's providence, as if he did not dispose of the things here upon earth, because things go thus among men; and to check ourselves, suspecting our wisdom that cannot see the causes of things, and God's course in disposing of them, when he deals diversely and not as we would think reason he should, yea, and ceasing from our wisdom to search into things more than we can comprehend. When thou seest a physician sometimes cutting, sometimes burning the same ulcer, yea, and ofttimes missing his art, yet thou dost not unmannerly object.* But in God, who never errs, but disposeth all things rightly and orderly according to his wisdom, thou a poor mortal art busy to know the reason of his counsels and doings, and dost not ascribe all to his infinite wisdom. Is not this extreme madness? But admit it lawful and fit to inquire, he certainly is purblind that cannot see even the special providence of God, when the hands of God go thus cross, like old Jacob's hand upon the heads of Joseph's children, and think with Joseph that they should be otherwise; for is it not a special wisdom in a physician to keep some whom he loves in a strict and spare diet, and others of whom he hath not, neither hath cause to have, the like care, to give them liberty to eat and drink what they list? Is it not special providence in a father if he keep his sons bare, and have a strait hand over them all the while they are at nonage, and suffer servants to have more liberty; not of a husbandman to keep the sheep he would have live longer, and have wool and lamb of them, when those he means shall soon come to the shambles he feeds, and in a large and fat pasture? And is it then want of wisdom and providence in God, if things thus go with his and the wicked? Nay, is it not the wise providence of God to put his children in such a condition as they may most shew the graces they have, and grow towards that they want, and ought to have, and the wicked in such a state as may most manifest their corruption, and by which they may best fulfil the measure of their iniquity? Now for the first, is affliction of any kind, Ps. cxix., 'Before I was afflicted I went wrong,' &c. Adversity enlarges our desire to God, as the seeds covered with ice are more fruitful.† And as in trees, if one pluck off the fruit and the leaves, and lop off the boughs too, so the stock remain, the tree will grow fairer; so if the root of godliness remain, though riches be taken away, and the body be afflicted, all will tend unto greater glory.

*Ye have said, It is in vain to serve the Lord.* In a more particular examination of these words, other things are to be observed; as, first, that they are said to have spoken against God and blasphemed him, because they account the service of God of no profit nor fruit.

*Doct.* For men to think or speak that it is a fruitless and unprofitable thing to serve God and to obey and worship him, to study piety and godliness, is a wicked speech and blasphemous thought against God. For that are these here challenged. It is that Jeremiah accuseth the men and their wives, the women, and all the women in Pathros of, Jer. xliv. 15, 17, 18, David confesseth this had ceased somewhat, and for the time, upon him, Ps. lxxiii. 13. This was that by which the devil provoked Job's wife to tempt him, and so was her blasphemy, Job. ii. 9, and Micah vii. 10, Job. xxi. 15.

*Reason* 1. Because it is flat contrary to his word, which witnesseth the contrary everywhere, that they shall be happy and have all things necessary that fear him, Ps. i. and xxxiv. 9, 10, with infinite other places, and many examples in the Scriptures.

*Reason* 2. Because by this they made God unfaithful, and so no God, who hath promised such fruit to them who sow in righteousness.

*Reason* 3. Because by this they deny the bounty and liberality of God, and is a great prejudice to his honour and glory, that he should dismiss such as serve him and belong to him empty-handed.

*Use* 1. Then have we many who must answer at God's judgment seat for blasphemy and proud speaking against him, with whom nothing is so common as upon any, even the slightest occasion, to condemn piety and the fear of God, for the most fruitless and the unprofitablest profession in the world. If they see any man who professeth God's fear, and seems careful of his ways, if he any way miscarry in his state, and decay in that the world deemed him to have had; or if he increase not as other men do, by a lawful and honest profession, as they, by all their byways and indirect courses; what do they? Will they inquire the just cause of it, and search what may be a let he prospers no better? Of which many just causes may be given of several men, and well found out Yet they never search further than this, their piety and profession, and the service of God, and though they will not directly speak as these, because that were palpable, yet they spare not these speeches, You may see what comes of this professing of all their piety and godliness! And this they whisper everywhere, like the ten spies of the holy promised land, and bring up an evil report of it, Numb. xiii. 33, and a slander upon it, Numb. xiv. 37. But let them know that upon those

* An tu cum medicum sæpius, &c.—*Chrysostom de vig.*

† Adversitas magis auget, &c.—*Greg. Epist.* 26, *Narsæ.*

ten spies, and upon all who believed them, the judgments of God befell, and they fell in the wilderness, and never came to set foot in the land of Canaan. Such recompence let these expect from the Lord, not to come into the promised land, whenas those they said should be a prey, if we may allude to Numb. xvii. 31, they shall not lose their recompence.

*Use* 2. To teach men, when they see those who profess the fear of God and piety, not to grow in the world, or to decay, not to be in so prosperous estate as others are, not to accuse their profession and piety, lest they be found, upon the return of their trial, guilty of blasphemy against God, denying his faithfulness, dishonouring him, as suffering his followers to be without reward and recompence for their service. And of two evils it is less, and the better to accuse man of hypocrisy in his service, and of some secret sin, which lying hid hinders his increasing, as iron in a wound hinders the curing of it. Or safer it is to apprehend here the wisdom of God, who, dealing like a wise physician, and seeing a full diet hinders the health of his patient, he for the time forbids him many things; as possessed with a fever, forbids him strong wines and drinks, and hard meats of digestion and such like: so God. Or were it not safer and the best course to impute it to his particular profession, that it is not so gainful; or his want of skill, he cannot make it; or his want of providence in disposing of business; or to imagine the truth, that the prosperous estate of God's stands not so much in riches as in graces; not so much in that they must leave behind them, as that they must carry with them, as the wealth of pilgrims and strangers standeth more in their jewels and gold things, light of carriage and well portable, than in house and land?

*Use* 3. To instruct men who do profess the fear and service of God, to walk carefully and prudently in their callings, that they may increase in an outward estate, to prevent the blasphemies and slanders of the wicked, who will sooner blaspheme God for their poverty, than glorify him for their piety; which exhortation is necessary for some who think it enough to profess, and excuse their poverty by the condition of God's saints, when they neglected lawful means, by which they might have increased, and been able to give rather than receive, which is a more blessed thing, and whereby they might have more honoured God; and therein the more culpable, that they make this a cover of their idleness, and haply injustice, for which God curseth them; adding this sin to the other, that they dishonour God. But if any man shall, upon this or the like pretence, neglect the best things, the only thing necessary, and growing in spiritual graces, when God and his own heart can tell him, it is but upon a covetous and ambitious humour, that man shall bear his iniquity. But if for conscience, as to be able to discharge the necessity of nature, person or place, so the rather to glorify God, and to stop the mouths of such as would reproach their profession; he first seeking God's kingdom, shall have these things cast to him here; and so in all things, he seeking the glory of God in the kingdom of grace, shall find glory and happiness in the kingdom of glory.

*What profit is it that we have kept his commandments?* These wicked men do challenge unto themselves righteousness and obedience, and upon that accuse God of injustice for their want and affliction. Whence we may observe,

*Doct.* 1. That hypocrites and wicked men challenge to themselves righteousness and obedience in the pride of their heart, when they have no such thing; ver. 7, 'Wherein shall we return?'

*Doct.* 2. It is the property of hypocrites and wicked men, when they are in God's judgments, in misery and affliction, to justify themselves, as not having deserved any such thing, and to accuse God of injustice, as an angry God that hath causelessly afflicted them. So did these, and those, Isa. lviii. 2, 3; and Jehoram; 2 Kings iii. 13, 'And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay, for the Lord hath called these three kings, to give them into the hand of Moab;' *i.e.* it is but your spleen against me, to upbraid me with any such things, because I favour them more than you. But if it were a sin, yet is not that the cause, seeing these two kings are in the like misery with me. So far were they, Jer. xliv. 17, 18, from acknowledging their sins the cause of any misery, either present or falling upon them, that they thought it came because they had not gone forwards in them. This is the cause why the prophets, when the people were in any judgment, did still put them in mind of their sins and cleared the Lord, and put the people often to accuse God if they could, Micah vi. 3; and when they threatened any to come, they ever produced and alleged their sins.

*Reason* 1. Because being ignorant and blind men, without the law and knowledge of it, their sin is dead; as Paul, Rom. vii. 8, they seem to be living. *Peccatum mortuum quod non agnosceretur* (Chrysostom); and so it doth not accuse them, which makes them not accuse themselves, but God rather.

*Reason* 2. Because if by the preaching of the minister, when he shall, Isa. lviii. 1, 'lift up his voice like a trumpet, and tell the people of their sins,' and by the coming of the law, Rom. vii. 9, they find themselves to be dead, yet they love their sins so dearly that they are very loath to part with them. Now if they should once confess it and accuse themselves, either they must part with it, or else look that God's hand should be more sharply upon them.

*Use* 1. This may direct men in their judgment, both themselves and others, when the hand and judgment is upon them, to discern, so far as such a thing can manifest a man's condition, whether God's or no, or

but hypocrites and wicked carnal men. They are pressed with God's hand, and his rod is upon his back, do they ingeniously and freely confess their sins, and accuse themselves, and give glory unto God, as bringing that justly upon them; and not only so, but confessing that it is mercy that they are not consumed, as Lam. iii. 22, their sins deserve so much more than they feel or bear? It is a good probable note that they are God's; not certain, because men may do it in hypocrisy, being wrung from them by their extremities, and do it in some sinister respect, as did Judas and Pharaoh. But, on the contrary, do men justify themselves or extenuate their sins? I say not only to men or to an enemy, when it may be lawful for a man to stand on his integrity, and ever to cover his infirmities, but to God and to his ministers, as these here; and as many men lie sick, and for aught they know upon their death-beds, and the minister shall press them with their former lives, and their sinfulness, and not their friends only seek to lessen them, and speak of their orderly and good carriage, and shew themselves to be discontented, they should be disquieted with any such thing, it is a very fearful thing, being a sign that in themselves they justify themselves, and think God deals but hardly with them, and they have deserved no such thing. But to these we may say as Christ to the pharisees, Luke xvi. 15, 'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

*Use* 2. This may let us see the necessity of the word of God; as at all times, so especially in time of affliction and judgments, when men in their hypocrisy are naturally prone to justify themselves, because their sin is dead, and their conscience laid asleep; but when the law cometh, it is quickened, Rom. vii. 9; yea, and not only made living, but strengthened, 1 Cor. xv. 56. So that it not only accuseth him in his conscience, but presseth him amain to accuse himself before God's judgment-seat; whereas without it they will be so far from humbling themselves, that they still will justify themselves, till they be consumed as dross in the fire; and with their dross, their sin. Therefore was it not for nothing that it was said: Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastisest, O Lord, and teachest him in thy law; because of ver. 13, they shall escape, when the other who want it shall perish. And so the best time for ministers to work, and the best opportunity, is when the affliction is upon them: Job xxxiii. 16, 'Then he openeth the ears of men, even by their corrections, which he hath sealed;' and they being as metal, heated and softened, the hammer will best work upon them, and then may they be best bended, and applied to good.

Ver. 15. *Therefore we count the proud blessed; even they that work wickedness are set up; and they that tempt God, yea, they are delivered.*

*Therefore we accounted the proud blessed.* These had denied the providence of God, and his government of the world, by the small profit that came to such as had care to keep his commandments and walk in his ways; now they essay to deny it, by the prosperity of such as transgress and contemn him; yea, by this they would not only disgrace piety, but prefer iniquity before it. For now they make the study, and endeavour in impiety to be honest and profitable, when of piety it was unfruitful, for the one neither brought honour nor profit to them who embraced it; the other brought both.

*Therefore we account.* As some, and *now we*, or *we also*, *i. e.* out of our own experience, we who have been diligent in our duties, forward in piety, followers of modesty, embracers of temperance and all other virtues, have only got this by it, that we cannot without envy speak of the happiness and prosperity of those who have taken a clean contrary course, for our obedience, piety, and humility hath made us but base and contemptible in the eyes of men, whereas others, by their pride and arrogancy, have gotten a name and renown unto themselves.

*Even they that work wickedness, are set up*, or *are built up.* The meaning is, they are increased in wealth and abundance. They who had nothing while they lived in upright and just courses, and could get nothing by plain and honest dealing, now that they are grown corrupt, and fallen into wicked and lewd courses, and used cunning and deceit, they have gained unspeakable wealth, and from nothing are so risen, that they are equal to any in wealth and dignity; for this sense is by the phrase of the Scripture to be built up, Ps. cxxvii. 1.

*And they who tempt God, they are delivered.* Not only they who injure and oppress men, and commit wickedness by fraud, and deceit, and such like, but they who contemn God also are happy; such as set light by his power and judgment, and of set purpose, committed and undertook heinous sins, to try whether he was so just and severe a judge and revenger as he was accounted to be. And yet, for all this boldness and contempt, we see they go free without any punishment, which, if God were such a one as he is accounted, a severe judge and revenger of the injuries against men, and indignities against himself, he ought not to have overpassed, but to have showed it in this. And thus these wicked men think they have sufficiently proved, that God hath not a care of the things done upon the earth.

Their second ground on which they deny God's providence, is the prosperity of the wicked, or making him to love them. *Vide* Doct. 2, in verse 17 chap. ii.

*They that work wickedness are set up.* Many wicked men prosper and increase in the world. These men speak so here out of their observation as a truth, though it be evilly applied and used against God, as Job's friends wrested many general things against him,

which were true in the general, but corrupted in the application.

*Doct.* Oftentimes it falls out that wicked men do increase and grow great in the world by their wicked means and impious crafts, which is not true only because these have said it, but that it is so shewed us by others: Ps. lxxiii. 12, 'Lo these are the wicked, yet prosper they alway, and increase in riches.' Job. xxi. 7, 'Wherefore do the wicked wax old and grow in wealth?' Jer. xii. 1, 2, 'O Lord! if I dispute with thee, thou art righteous: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? why are all they in wealth that rebelliously transgress? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root: they grow and bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.' Ps. xvii. 14, 'Men of this world, who have their portion in this life, whose bellies thou fillest with thine hid treasure: their children have enough, and leave the rest of their substance for their children.'

*Reason* 1. Because God doth use them to punish his.* For the good and safety of his people, he useth the irrational and insensible creature, as a labouring beast or an instrument, which, when the work is done, is of no further use; he useth the reasonable creature, but ill affected, as his rod of correction, which, when his son is beaten, he throws into the fire as an unprofitable twig; and he useth good angels and men as coadjutors and fellow-soldiers, whom, when the victory is had, he liberally rewards. Now for this, every one must have their proportionable strength and power. And so the wicked, therefore they grow.

*Reason* 2. Because by it many are and may be tried who live in the church, who not prospering by their piety and profession, because of their hypocrisy in it, when they see the prosperity of the wicked, and see the afflictions and poverty of the church, will leave and forsake the society of it, and joining themselves to the other, accounting it to be the better, Ps lxxiii. 10. And so they shew themselves, and hereto I apply that Prov. xxviii. 12, 'When the wicked come, the man is tried.'

*Reason* 3. Because his judgments and justice might be more eminent and perspicuous, when he shall cast them down that are aloft, and were in the eyes of men for their greatness, and richness, and glory. For as in states, though a thousand petty thieves be hanged, yet nothing such notice is taken of the justice of the state, as when one great offender of some great note and eminence is executed, and hath the censure of the law executed against him.

*Use* 1. Do they not then deceive us, or go about to do it, when they would persuade us there is the truth, and there is piety, in that company and society where is plenty and abundance, and for that persuade us to turn in thither? because waters in a full cup are wrung out unto us, and separated from them, many afflictions, and many miseries and calamities; as the champions of the church of Rome do. With as good reason the people withstood Jeremiah, or would have persuaded him that the worship of the queen of heaven was rather the better than the worship of the King of heaven and earth, because they prospered for a while in outward things, more in the one than the other, Jer. xliv. 16, 17. And so may any idolaters persuade us.

*Use* 2. To teach us not to wonder or be offended with the growing or increasing of the wicked, specially if it come by wicked arts and impieties; for it is no new thing, nor strange to be wondered at, nor much disadvantage to be offended with. It is no new thing, for all ages and places have their examples of it; many atheists, idolaters, oppressors, persecutors, have grown to exceeding height of glory and outward eminency. Now, as that which is hath been, so that which hath been is; no wonder to see it again, that men, by flattery, injustice, oppression, idolatry, and such like, should be built up, and build up their houses and families; neither is there cause that we should be offended, for they build but to their destruction: all shall be but a Babel. As they say the phœnix builds her nest with hot spices, neither is it our disadvantage that we should grieve though they be our rods, for that were too childish to grieve to see willows and birch-trees grow, because rods are made of them, whenas it is not in them they hurt us, but in ourselves; for if it were not our own sins, they should not be our scourges, as rods should never hurt children, nor they find the smart of them, that rebel not against their father and governors. Less should we so be offended that we should turn into them, for that were as if a traveller should join himself with a rout of thieves upon hope to keep that he hath, and incur by that means the common justice of the land, to lose all, and life with it. *Vide* August. in Ps. xci., *Nullum mare tam profundum quam est Dei cogitatio ut mali floreant*, &c. Consider that they must be scourges, remember these are to try, forget not that they shall make his justice more eminent; that as the state carries some to execution by posterns and by-gates, and others through the market-place, so God some to hell and destruction by poverty, others by plenty; some by baseness, others by honour. In the mean time, they know they stand but upon slippery places.

*And they that tempt God, yea, they are delivered.* Such as live wickedly and contemptuously against him, escape his judgments, and often are delivered when others fall in them.

*Doct.* It oftentimes falls out with wicked men, such as live in the contempt of God, and provoke him every day, not to be of a long punished, and to escape when others are smitten. So with these, and Job xxi. 9, Hosea iv. 14, Ps. lxxxi. 12, Jer. x. 25. He prayeth,

* Utitur in salutem suorum irrationali et insensibili, &c. —*Bern. de gr. et lib. arbit.*

as thinking it too too long that they escaped. So Joab and Shimei escaped in the plague.

*Reason* 1. Because the Lord is very slow to wrath, both to execute and to exercise his displeasure. The reason that Jonah gave, why he went not to Nineveh, fearing God would spare when he had spoken, and so call his word into question, Jonah iv. 2.

*Reason* 2. Because their iniquities are not yet full, nor they grown ripe for the harvest, that God might thrust in the sickle of his wrath, Gen. xv. 16.

*Use* 1. Not to think it strange, if we see wicked men, profane men, contemners of God, his word and worship, go on, and enjoy prosperity and peace, and no evil happen to them, like as to other men, but they escape when they fall; but think then of the great patience of God, and censure not his justice for sparing of them, who knows his times better than we can discern, and reprieves but men for their plagues, as judges do malefactors, till their iniquity be found out, and till their ephah be full; and in compassion towards them, trouble at the remembrance of their fearful end, when that shall be: Job xxi. 30, 'But the wicked is kept unto the day of destruction, and they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.'

*Use* 2. This may instruct men, that in a plague and misery, to be spared and to be delivered is not simply and in itself a blessing, for as all outward are as the mind of man is, and meats as the stomach, so in this deliverance. A thief accounts it a benefit to be reprieved for a while, yet it is not but according to the intent of the judge and the use he makes of it. So in this; we have all escaped God's rod and his plague, blowing up, and destruction offer it.* We all bless God, but to all it is not a benefit in itself, seeing even wicked men are spared and delivered, that their sin may be full, and they receive the more full revenge, and a more fearful reward. *Unusquisque consideret non quid alius passus sit, sed quid pati ipse mereatur, nec evasisse se credat, si eum interim pœna distulerit, cum timere plus debeat, quem sibi Dei judicis censura servavit* (*Cyprian de lapsis*, 21). As he that hath escaped a serpent, and is fallen into the power of a lion; therefore let every one examine whether it be a blessing to him to be thus delivered, if the patience of God hath brought him to repentance and reformation, but otherwise thou art delivered rather in anger than in mercy; and art deceived, as the sick man, that thinks a good turn is done him when he hath what meat and drink he desires; unless that which the fire could not soften the sun do, and that thy heart relent, as Saul at David's kindness, who had spared his life when he might have taken it away, 1 Sam. xxiv. 17.

Ver. 16. *Then spake they that feared the Lord every one to his neighbour: and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*

*Then spake they that feared the Lord.* The prophet having reproved the blasphemy of the wicked, and shewed their grounds on which they denied the providence of God, he now answereth them, first, in this verse, by opposing unto them the contrary opinion, of these who did truly fear God; secondly, ver. 17, by a sweet promise on God's part of great goodness and mercy towards the godly who rested in his promises; thirdly, ver. 18, denouncing a judgment which the wicked should have experience of, when they should see the difference betwixt them and those who feared him.

*Then spake they that feared the Lord.* In this verse the prophet brings in the godly answering and encouraging one another, contrary to that which the wicked had said. And so it is. The godly of those times, though haply but few, at what time the wicked spoke thus blasphemously, did mutually exhort one another not to faint or be dismayed by those speeches of the wicked, or by them to be drawn from their piety to wickedness and corruption; but they had their mutual speeches to further one another in their good course, as the others had to harden one another in their wicked courses. But what said they? St Jerome and some others think that the prophet hath not told us, but that telling us the just did speak, it must be supposed that they spoke fitting and good things in defence of the providence of God and his government, and such things as they had learned by the Scriptures, and had received from the instruction of their teachers; but saving their judgments, I rather incline to those who think the words following to be theirs, and not God's words, who seemeth not to speak till the 17th verse. Thus then, in comforting one another, they said,

*The Lord hearkened and heard; i.e.* howsoever they imagine that the Lord sees and hears nothing, respecteth nor regardeth what is done or said, yet he hath heard, and doth most diligently observe, what is said and done; for so much hearkening doth carry and will import, namely, care and diligence, as Ps. v. 2, 2 Chron. vi. And so by this they confirm the contrary to that which the wicked had said, that God did not regard, that it is manifest that he hears their words; not a word drops from them which is unknown to him; much more, all their actions are diligently and attentively regarded. And that it may appear it is not for a space or a short time, but perpetually, therefore he hath a book of remembrance; which is not spoken as if God had any such book, or stood in need of it, as if he were subject to forgetfulness, but it is spoken in respect of men, by which they may be assured that the will and decree of God touching them and the wicked is certain and constant, which is better expressed by a book than by words; for that which is written is more durable and permanent, whereas things spoken vanish away, and are blown away in the air.

* Qu. 'after it'?—ED.

*For them that feared the Lord.* That is, for such as fear him, that he will not forget their labours and obedience, but will recompense and reward it, even to their very thoughts and intents, thinking and remembering his commandments to observe and do them.

*Therefore spake they who feared the Lord.* The prophet answereth the blasphemy of the wicked in this verse by opposing unto them the contrary opinion of those who did truly fear God. And in this, first, their encouragement; secondly, their ground. First, God's hearing and regarding; secondly, his certain decree for shewing good to them.

The first thing here is the encouragement one of another.

*Doct.* It is the duty of every one fearing God to encourage and strengthen one another in the service and worship of God. Here, and Heb. iii. 13, 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be burdened through the deceitfulness of sin;' and x. 24, 'And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works.' Micah iv. 2. And here we may make that general which was spoken particularly to Peter, as to all ministers, so to Christians: Luke xxii. 32, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: therefore when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' So Baruch and the princes did help one another: Jer. xxxvi. 11, 13, 15, 16, 'When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the books all the words of the Lord, then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read in the book in the audience of the people. And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it, that we may hear. So Baruch read it in their audience. Now, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid, both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will certify the king of all these words.'

*Reason* 1. Because they are God's, such as have received this honour to be called his, and to be his; therefore reason as sons, they should not only themselves, but by all other means seek it in others, and draw others to it.

*Reason* 2. Because they are members one of another, Eph. iv. 25, therefore, as members, they ought to strengthen, uphold, and keep up one another, that as they naturally in the health and good temperature of the body, so these spiritually in the good state of the soul.

*Use* 1. To convince their error, who think it only a duty appertaining to the minister to exhort and stir up others, and to strengthen and confirm them. Truth it is that it is specially and principally his duty, as being Christ's lieutenant upon the earth, who doth by them perform that, Isa. lxi. 1, namely, preach and bind up the broken-hearted; but yet it appertains to every one; so is it manifestly proved. If any say he is not appointed to be his brother's keeper, it is but the voice of Cain, of a wicked and graceless man.

*Use* 2. To condemn their practice, who, either out of this error of their mind, or out of the corruption of their heart, altogether neglect this duty; to say nothing of those who labour to weaken the strong, to cool the zealous, to discourage the forward, and shew themselves in the number of the former wicked rather than in these who feared the Lord. I say, to say nothing of these, the other shew themselves to have little or not such care and zeal for the worship and service of God as sons should have for their father's honour, and little love or care of other's goods, as fellow members and brethren should have one for another. And do they not give just suspicion they are neither sons nor members, or but dead and rotten members of the body, not of the soul of the church? (as Saint Augustine.) As that member which hath no feeling of the weakness and fainting of another, and seeks not to support it, may be materially but not formally of the body, so in this. Or if they be, yet can they not avoid to be guilty of their falling away and perishing, as he that sees his neighbour fainting or perishing, and he able to sustain him, and both knows and hath that might help him, and doth not, is guilty of his perishing.

*Use.* 3. To teach every one to practise this duty, and to shew that he is possessed with the fear of God, by exciting and exhorting others, by strengthening and confirming others, according to the grace he hath received, which as it will testify they are God's, and manifest their love unto their members, so will it be gainful unto them; and the gain of it should incite them. As St Chrysostom of converting, I, of keeping and confirming; when, *non minor virtus, quam quærere,** *parta tueri.* If one should promise thee a piece of gold for every man whom thou reformest, thou wouldst use all thy study and endeavour, persuading and exhorting. But now God promiseth thee not one piece, nor ten, nor twenty, nor an hundred thousand, nor the whole world, but that that is more, the kingdom of heaven, as a recompence of thy labour in this kind. What excuse can we have, after such a promise, if we neglect the salvation of our brethren? If physicians for a piece of gold will come to strengthen the body, if lawyers will defend a man's title, how ought we the soul for so much! And that we may do it, we must take but the apostle's lesson, Heb. x. 24, to observe one another; not to triumph over their weakness and infirmities, but as physicians that inquire into the state of their patients' bodies, and into their carriage and diet, to cure them. We had need of others' help, because the gift we have is apt to decay: 2 Tim. i. 6, 'Wherefore I put thee in mind that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.' 2 Thes. v. 19, 20; Zech. iv. 1, 'And the angel that talked with me came again and waked me, as a man that is raised out of his sleep.' And the profit of this duty will be great: for as, Prov. xxvii. 17, 'iron sharpeneth iron, so doth man sharpen the face of his friend.'

* Qu. '*parere*'?—ED.

*And the Lord hearkened and heard.* So they arm themselves against those instances given, with assurance that the Lord did regard things done.

*Doct.* The Lord he taketh notice and knoweth all things that are done and spoken by men, whether good or evil, as his eyes are everywhere, Prov. xv. 3; so his ears, Isaiah xxii. 14, and Ps. xciv. 9, 'He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? or he that formed the eye, shall he not see?' And Ps. cxxxix. 4, 'For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, thou knowest it wholly, O Lord!'

*Use* 1. To teach us to keep a watch over our mouth and lips, not let them run at random; *i.e.* for quantity, let our words be few, be not talkative, let them be like God's: Ps. xii. 6, 'The words of the Lord are pure words, as the silver, tried in a furnace of earth, fined seven fold.' Prov. x. 20, 'The tongue of the just man is as fined silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth.' Eccles. v. 2, 3, 6, 7, 'For as a dream cometh by the multitude of business, so the voice of a fool is in the multitude of words. When thou hast vowed a vow to God, defer not to pay it; for he delighteth not in fools. Pay therefore that thou hast vowed, for in the multitude of dreams and vanities are also many words; but fear thou God. If in a country thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the defrauding of judgment and justice, be not astonished at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.' The wicked talk boldly, their tongue walketh against heaven, Ps. lxxiii., but God in heaven heareth what is spoken in earth; therefore consider that of Solomon, Prov. x. 19, 'In many words there cannot want iniquity, but he that refraineth his lips is wise.' Secondly, for quality, look to the matter of speech, that it be godly and religious: Ephes. v. 'Let not foolish talking be once heard amongst you, as becometh saints,' but let it be savoury. Col. iv. 6, 'Let your speech be gracious always, and powdered with salts, that ye may know how to answer every man.' If a great man overheard us, or one we stood in awe of, we should be careful of our speech.

*Use* 2. An encouragement for God's children, that are talking together of good things, a strong motive to move them to confer together of good things, as Psal. lxxxii. 1, 'God standeth in the assembly of gods, he judgeth among gods;' so in the assembly of saints. Servants, if they perceive that their masters overhear them talking of anything, or oversee them doing of anything, speak and do well. This is eye-service or ear-service; yet God would [not] be served with eye and ear service, and he that seeth in secret will reward openly. And the words are, *attendit Jehovah et audit*, he hearkened and heard; he so hears that he also attends or regards it. A man may overhear a thing and not regard it, and so as good as he heard it not, Eccles. vii. 22. But God, as he hears, so he regardeth. Contrary to that the wicked say, Ps. x. that God regardeth it not, Zeph. i. 12. But God doth regard the words of the tongue, because he hath made a law as well for the words as deeds. God made the tongue, and therefore will have the fruit: 1 Cor. vii. 20, 'For ye are bought for a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, for they are God's.' So with tongue as well as hand; and therefore we must look to give account of words, as well as of our actions: Mat. xii. 36, 'But I say unto you, that of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment.' Jude, verses 14, 15, 'And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of such, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with thousands of his saints, to give judgment against all men, and to rebuke all the ungodly among them, of all their wicked deeds, which they have ungodly committed; and of all their cruel speakings, which wicked sinners have spoken against him.' *Plumea verba, plumbea pondera*, windy words, if they be wicked words, lie as a dead weight on thy soul. Take heed of lifting up his name, take heed of an oath, for it bringeth an heavy burden. But it is our encouragement, I say, that God rewards us for good words as well as for our deeds; though they seem to be but little worth, they are arguments of a sanctified heart, and of the fear of God: as it is, Mat. xii. 34, 35, 'O generation of vipers, how can you speak good things when ye are evil? for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of an evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.'

*And a book of remembrance was written before him.* That is, he keeps the remembrance of the things he knows.

*Doct.* The Lord, as he seeth and knoweth all things, so he remembereth them; as he hath knowledge, without ignorance of any thing, so he hath remembrance without oblivion of the same things, good or evil. Therefore is he here said to have a book, because things are more certainly and perpetually kept in it. than left to remembrance of man. Hence is that Amos. viii 7, 'The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works;' Heb. vi. 10, 'For God is not unrighteous, that he should forget your works and labour of love, which ye shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered unto the saints, and yet minister.' Ps. cxxxix. 2, Jer. xliv. 21, Ps. lvi. 8, 'Thou hast counted my wanderings, put my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy register?' Dan. vii. 10, Rev. xx. 12. A similitude taken from kings, who have things written for memory, Esther vi. 1, though God need not.

*Reason* 1. Because of his eternal and infinite apprehension, being as able to apprehend things and keep them, done thousand years since, as but yesterday; as man is able to remember things done but yesterday, as that Ps. xc. 4, 2 Peter iii. 8.

*Reason* 2. Because he is absolutely perfect, without either sin or imperfection, therefore without oblivion, that in many things is sin, and in anything imperfection; even as ignorance of things necessary to be known, and which may be known, is sin; of things not necessary is imperfection and infirmity, though without sin.

*Obj.* Isaiah xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that putteth away thine iniquities for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Then God doth forget, and there is oblivion in him.

*Ans.* God's forgetting of sin is like his not seeing of sin, Num. xxiii. 21, which is not that he seeth not the act and thing done, but he seeth it not to impute it to them; in that respect he is as though he saw it not. So he forgetteth not the act and the thing done, but not to impute it to him, or to punish him for it, which is in effect to forget it; as his remembrance is taken for the effect of his remembrance, as Isaiah xxxviii. 3, 9, I pray thee, let me have the effect and feeling of thy remembrance, let me know by experience thou dost remember me. So his forgetfulness or forgetting is taken for the effect and feeling of it. They should find he had as it were forgotten.

*Use* 1. To let us see the folly of wicked men, as in committing sin in secret and dark, thinking the Lord cannot or doth not see; so in seeking to cover it committed, and labour to bring an oblivion of it, who though the corruption cleave to them,—as Jer. xvii, 1, 'The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, and graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;'—yet they by all means labour to forget it; and if they have escaped and prospered with it for a month or two, or a year or two, &c., they think also God hath forgotten it. But do they not deceive themselves, when with God is no oblivion, no forgetfulness? What benefit can they then get by this? Even as a malefactor that hath committed some heinous offence, whom the magistrate lets alone to see what he will do, whether he will seek his pardon or no, and he goes about to corrupt or remove all that should give evidence against him, when it is in the power of the judge both to be witness and judge, and proceed of his own knowledge, and out of his own memory of the act, and who also cannot forget; so here. What got the sons of Jacob by smothering their treachery to their father and brother? It may terrify the wicked, that every evil word is registered, Matth. xiii.; and though God should not, the devil would keep them in mind to accuse them, Rev. xii., yea, and their own consciences, God's register book.

*Use* 2. To instruct every man to keep his books of account well, and to remember all his debts and his sins, seeing they shall be remembered though he would forget them, or could, whenas his remembrance of them to humble himself, and to get his pardon, makes God to forget them. St Chrysostom would have a man not to forget his sins after pardon; not to consume thyself with the thought of them, but to teach thy soul not to grow wanton, nor to fall into the same sins again,* but most necessary before, that he may have God to forget them, who, as he justifies him that condemns himself, pardons him that accuseth himself; so he forgets his sins who remembers them himself, in that forgetfulness is incident to them. And as St Ambrose, God knows all things, yet he expects thy confession, not that he may punish, but pardon thee.† So the Lord remembers all, yet he expecteth the sinner should remember him of them, not that he might punish them, but pardon them.

*Use* 3. Comfort for men, as to do well, because the Lord seeth, so though they do not see their rewards, and find but a mean recompence among men, as if all their labour were forgot, yet to hold on and continue, and not to faint, for the Lord cannot forget; and as in sin, he remembering of it, cannot but punish it in time, so in good, he cannot but reward it. And as the way to have remission of sins and to have them forgotten is to remember them, so the way to have reward of our works is to forget them; as St Paul, Philip iii. 13, 14.

*For them that feared the Lord.* Some think the Lord took special notice therefore of it, because it was so rare and commendable a thing for any to hold his fear, faith, and a good conscience in the midst of that wicked and froward people.

*Doct.* It is a thing most commendable for men to be upright in the midst of a wicked and froward people, and not to be carried with the stream, Rev. iii. 4.

*For them that feared the Lord.* The Lord hath a book of remembrance for them, which is not barely to remember what they have done, but effectually to remember it; that is, to reward it. And so much *for them* importeth, that it is for their benefit and profit, and to recompense and reward them.

*Doct.* It is not in vain to serve the Lord; but godliness is gainful, and they who fear the Lord, and think upon his commandments to do them, they shall be blessed, and have their reward in their measure in this life, and in the full measure in the life to come. So much is affirmed directly here, James i. 25, 'Blessed in the deed.'

*Reason.* Because justice requires it, and equity, that he should not dismiss his servants empty-handed, specially old, and who have spent their strength in his service, Heb. vi. 10. But of this point formerly.

Ver. 17. *And they shall be to me, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day that I shall do this, for a flock; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

* Non ut teipsum, &c.—*Chrysost. Hom.* 12, *ad popu. Antioch.*

† Novit omnia Deus, sed, &c.—*Ambrose*

*And they shall be to me, saith the Lord.* Here is the prophet's second answer, from a gracious and sweet promise of God, of his goodness and favour towards them who fear him, even as an effect of his remembrance, and a proof he did not forget them. And the sum of this promise is, that in the time of the gospel he would make his choice and refusal of the good and bad, when it should appear who was more excellent than others, so that those who did believe should be taken into his family, and should enjoy great commodities and great dignity, both be his and so respected, and enjoy the benefits belonging to his.

*And they shall be to me. And* here hath the force of an illation or reference to the former sentence, ending that and beginning this; *i.e.* To shew that I remember them, I will make them mine; so much the phrase in the original signifies.

*In that day when I shall make them my treasure, my peculiar.* The Lord, to shew how dear they should be unto him, how he would defend them, how he would honour and adorn them, used this word, which is used, Exod. xix. 5, translated 'chief treasure.' It signifies a portion of wealth got by a man's own labour and industry, which men use to love more earnestly and keep more diligently when they have it; and so, by this he tells them how dear and precious they should be unto him, who did receive the gospel and truly profess him.

Some understand this of the last judgment only, and that day, which is not probable; some both of the day, the gospel, and the judgment, which hath great probability with it.

*I will spare them*, or *I will use mercy and compassion towards them.* I will receive them and specially love them, and will shew my love in this, in sparing them when they offend, or, as some, in winking at their infirmities and corruptions, and not rejecting their service for them, which the similitude doth shew.

*As a man spareth*, &c. A similitude illustrating the promise of compassion and mercy, shewing how great and how tender his compassions should be toward them, when it should be as of a father to his son, whom he loves both as his son, and also because of that reverence, honour, and obedience he hath done unto him. Now, this that is first promised is that they shall be his, for so is the phrase, they shall be mine, like that which we have, Gen. xlviii. 5, 'And now thy two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, which are born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, shall be mine; as Reuben and Simeon are mine;' *i.e.* they shall not be as my grandchildren, but as my own sons, and in the division of the land shall have their portions as any one of my sons. So here, They shall be mine; *i.e.*, I will adopt them and make them mine, who are not so by nature nor of themselves.

*Doct.* No man is of himself and by nature, not of his parents, the child of God, but adopted so of God to it. Rev. ii. 17, 'And in thee a new name written.'

*In that day that I shall do this for a flock;* or rather, in that day when I shall make them my chief treasure, as it is translated, Exod. xix. 5. But all comes to one end, to note how dear the church and people of God are unto him.

*Doct.* They who fear God, and think of his name, delight in his ways, are more excellent than others, and more precious, dear, and beloved of God. Rev. ii. 9 with 1 Peter ii. 9.

*And I will spare them*, &c. Another matter promised unto them, and in it two things: first, that he would wink at and pass by their infirmities, when they served him and did the duties of his worship, and pass by many infirmities in them, which he will not do in another; secondly, that when he did visit them, yet he would do it in love and compassion, and use them as a father his son that serveth him.

*Doct.* This is a special thing promised to God's children, proper to them, that in their obedience when they endeavour to serve and perform duties commanded, he will accept it though it be mixed with many infirmities, and will wink at them and pass by them as though he never saw them, Micah vii. 18.

*I will spare them*, or *have compassion of them.* When he should come to afflict and correct them, it should be in compassion and love.

*Doct.* The Lord, when he afflicts and corrects his, he doth it in compassion and love, grieving to do it, retaining ever his fatherly affection towards them. Isa. xxvii. 4, Rev. iii. 19.

Ver. 18. *Then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*

*Then shall you return and discern*, &c. The third part of the answer to these, threatening a judgment to these who spoke thus blasphemously against the Lord. The sum is, that such a judgment should come upon them as should open their eyes which they winked on now, and make them see and acknowledge a difference, as well in the things, as in God's affection, betwixt the good and bad.

*Then shall you*, who now blaspheme God, and say you have found nor reaped any profit by my service. *Shall return;* that is, be smitten with a late and unprofitable, yea, damned repentance, no true and serious returning.

*And discern.* Out of woful experience, when you shall feel your own misery and see the happy estate and condition of the godly, shall you know in how far better estate *the righteous;* that is, he that is careful and conscionable in all the duties of justice, honesty, and equity; *and the wicked*, him that hath no conscience at all, but is unjust, unfaithful, unclean, or any ways wicked; yea, you shall discern and know how excellent his estate is *that serveth God*, that is conscionable in all the duties of the first table, and is studious and zealous of religion.

*And him that serveth him not;* who hath no care of any such thing, but is profane, and in all things irreligious.

*You shall discern.* You shall be made to know that God sleepeth not in heaven, when men do give themselves to all licentiousness and iniquity even with greediness upon earth, and by experience will perceive that men shall not go free for all their sins, but shall come to an account and reckoning; and so the meaning is, that by their own punishments which God shall lay upon them, they shall discern the difference; for whenas God shall spare them, he shall rise in judgment against you, and come armed upon you, and then you shall know that he took notice of all things done by men, and that he would not suffer sin unpunished, though he have dissembled, as it were, for a time.

*You return.* This may be taken for the sense of God's judgment, wherewith the wicked shall be affected; though they shall not repent, though their madness against God may by this be repressed, it breaks not forth no more.

*Doct.* The judgments of God shall make the wicked to acknowledge the providence of God, that he governs and takes care of men and things which are done here upon earth. So much is the scope and sum of this verse manifest by that Isa. xxviii. 19, and that Ps. lviii., *per totum*, specially ver. 11; the example of Pharaoh shews it; and that Dan. iv. 22, 32, Isa. xxvi. 11.

*Reason* 1. Because though all his mercies and blessings should draw them to it, yet they do it not; even the best are apt to grow secure and fat under them. Whereas his justice and judgments do more waken them; those daub up, these clear; as sharp things especially clear the sight when they make the eyes smart.

*Reason* 2. Because they shall see and feel themselves smitten when the other are spared, as Egypt and Goshen; or smitten otherwise than they, Isa. xxvii. 7, 8.

*Discern between the righteous and the wicked*, &c. That is, how excellent one is above the other; that whereas they thought this far more happy and honourable, they should see their error, and be made to confess that the other is far more excellent, happy, and honourable.

*Doct.* The righteous, and he that serveth God, he that maketh conscience of his ways both with men and God in righteousness and piety, is far more excellent, happy, and glorious than the wicked and him that serveth him not, than he that is given to pride and contemns God, &c. The Lord saith they shall discern it; then must it needs be so, yea, it is so, though not discerned of them; that of the covenant sheweth it, Gen. xii. 2, 3, 'And I will make of thee a great nation, and will bless thee, and will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: I will also bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;' that of Balaam, Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end be like his.' Wishing the worst part as is commonly accounted, and so shewing what he thought, whose testimony is without suspicion, he being an enemy. That of Isa. xxvii. 2, *et alias*, the church a vineyard, they as vines, when the wicked are compared to thorns, ver. 4; hence that of Cant. ii. 2, of the church and members more excellent, as the lily than the thorns. Rev. ii. 1, as gold is more excellent than other metals, yea, as in the goldsmith's shop it surpasseth the iron tongs, and the hammer, the anvil and the coals, so these all the rest.

*Reason* 1. Because they are in special favour and love with God, and specially beloved of him, whereas the other is in his high hatred. In a state, what subject more happy and excellent than he that is in the king's favour? Who more miserable than he that is in the hatred of the king, specially when there ever is matter found in him that he may shew his displeasure in justice? How gracious and happy, how ignominious and unhappy, was Haman successively, the book of Esther sheweth!

*Reason* 2. Because they are God's sons; they but his servants at best, at the worst and in truth the slaves of Satan; sons better than the servants of a good king, much more than the slaves of such a tyrant.

*Reason* 3. Because they are the members of Christ. As the church is his body, then such an head must have glorious members; whereas the other are the members of Satan.

*The righteous, and him that serveth God.* These two the prophet joineth together, as the other two opposites. By these he teacheth this

*Doct.* There is no justice where there is not the worship and service of God, no righteousness where there is not religion; for these two go still together, and hand in hand. So much this conjunction of the apostle sheweth, as that Acts x. 35, 'He that feareth God and worketh righteousness.' Hence Micah vi. 8, 'To do justly and walk humbly with God,' are joined together. Therefore, as St Paul makes faith the establishment of the law, Rom. iii. 21, so St James makes works and righteousness the perfection of faith, James ii. 22; that is, that which shews it to be sincere and lively or living.* Both, that there is no faith without righteousness, so no true righteousness without faith.

*Reason* 1. Because, Rom. xiv. 23, 'whatsoever is not faith is sin.'

*Reason* 2. Because it is not righteousness, as it is not a good work, though it be the work that is good otherwise, which hath not a good end and a good ground, which hath not the warrant of the word, not done in conscience to it, because it commands it, James ii. 8. Then, *è contra*, having another end than God's glory, a man's gain, or praise, or such like.

* A justifying faith containeth this faith of profession in it.

Hence Christ reproveth the works of hypocrites; though they did the works of justice, it was not righteousness in them, Mat. vi. 2, 5. Now where religion is not, it must be that they shall want their ground and have their end corrupt.

*Use* 1. Then not without ground have the fathers before us, and we now, affirm that the works of the infidels and heathen are not righteousness, whatsoever of chastity, equity, justice, virginity, or the like, but rather *splendida peccata*, for they being void of religion cannot have righteousness, James ii. 22.

*Use* 2. To teach us what to judge of the works of ignorant and irreligious men, such as have no knowledge of religion, make no conscience of the service and worship of God; certainly we account them not, neither can we account them, righteousness. But we say, as James i. 26, 'His religion is vain;' no religion, though he do the works of religion, which hath not justice, and mercy, and love joined with it. So we say his righteousness is vain, which hath not the works of religion with it. We see a man hear the word, receive the sacrament, be diligent in the works of God's worship, but he is unjust, covetous, unchaste, &c., we say his religion is in vain; and this will every one subscribe to. We see men just, and chaste, and liberal in alms, &c., but he is irreligious, he regards not God's day, he neglects the word, the sacrament, prayer, and such like; we say his righteousness is vain. But this will not all subscribe to; but they shall know it at one time or other that it is in vain; not only so far as Chrysostom speaks of works without faith, comparing them with the relics of the dead carcases,* though they be covered with precious and rich cloths, yet have no heat for them; so such as want faith, though they shine with glorious works, yet they do them no good. Now where there is not knowledge nor conscience of religion, there cannot be faith. But further Origen (in Job) goes: † All things which men do, whether in keeping their virginity, or in abstinence, or in the chasteness of their bodies, or in the mortifying of the flesh, or in the distributing of their goods, they are all to no purpose, and to their loss, if they do them not of faith. And I infer they cannot be of faith where there is not care and conscience of religion. In vain then shall it be unto them, for it shall bring them no fruit, no profit. For of whom should they have their reward? Shall they receive from him whom they have not sought, whom they have not known, whom they have not believed? Verily they shall not receive from him any reward, but judgment, and anger, and condemnation.

*Use* 3. This may admonish every one to add to their righteousness religion, to lay hold of that, and not to withdraw their hand from this; or rather to make their works of righteousness to be righteousness, by labouring to be religious, to have knowledge and faith, to have the fear of God and to serve him, without which the other is nothing, nothing profitable to the doer; for as preaching, being so excellent a work as the power of God to salvation to the hearers, profits not the preacher if he be unjust, unchaste, impious, but it shall be with him as with those that built Noah's ark; so as he that gives alms, if he be without knowledge, religion, and faith, he may profit the receiver, not himself. For if the apostle's rule be good, James ii. 26, 'Faith without works is dead,' then why not much more, saith Chrysostom, are works without faith? which works must needs be where there is no religion. And so he shall not have his reward that doth them, but they will be unprofitable to him; for as he that builds without a foundation loseth his work, and hath only his labour, travail, and grief, so is he that would build up works of righteousness without faith and religion (Origen). And as he saith, all the whole year that Noah was preserved in the ark, and the sun shewed not herself, nor sent her beams upon the earth, the earth gave no fruit, for without the sun it can bring forth no fruit; so unless the truth of God shine in the hearts of men, they can bring forth no fruit of good works or righteousness. Then must every one endeavour, that is just, upright, chaste, &c., not to rest there, but labour to be religious, and have knowledge and faith which must sanctify and make acceptable, and so profitable to the other, as the temple the gold, and the altar the offering, lest they be to us, as Cyprian (*ser. de zelo et livore*), or rather as the Spirit of God saith, Rom. xiv. 23, 'sin, because not of faith.'

* Cadavera enim etsi, &c.—*Chrysost.*

† Omnia quæ fatiant homines, &c.—*Orig.*

## CHAPTER IV.

*For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, and health shall be under his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as fat calves. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be dust under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb in all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fear-*

*ful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with cursing.*

VER. 1. *For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and shall leave them neither root nor branch.*

*For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven.* In this fourth chapter we may observe two principal parts:

First, some predictions, which are three: first, a prophecy of judgment to the wicked, ver. 1; secondly, of mercy and goodness to the godly, vers. 2, 3; thirdly, of John Baptist his coming, and the fruit of it to the church, vers. 5, 6.

Secondly, a precept or exhortation, to read and remember the law, ver. 4.

Now in this first verse is a prediction or denunciation of judgment, even an utter destruction to the wicked, by it opposing their former blasphemy, who had affirmed that God did not respect the things that were done, and had altogether cast off the duty and office of a judge. And in this the first word, *behold*, shews the certainty of it, pointing at it as if it were already come and present.

*Doct.* The judgment God threatens against the wicked, he certainly performs. *Vide* chap. i. 5, *Doct.* 1.

*The day cometh.* Many think this is to be understood of the day of the second coming of Christ, when the wicked shall have their full doom; and true it is, till then this and the like are not fully accomplished, the wicked have not their full portion; yet doth God so execute his judgments here, as may be to manifest his justice and to confirm the faith of his, shewing by some few examples and small things that he doth, that one day he will fully judge the wicked. Therefore their opinion is the more probable and reasonable, who think this was meant of the first coming of Christ, that upon their ungrateful rejecting of mercy, whereas they boasted of a redeemer and looked for a great day, the day indeed should come, but not such a day as they imagined, but such as should consume them; like that day, Amos v. 20, 'a day of darkness and not light.' And therefore he addeth, it shall burn as an oven, a common phrase in Scripture, when God's wrath and man's power to resist are compared. God's wrath is as fire, which consumes any dry matter it lights upon, for so it follows.

*All the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble.* Which words answer their blasphemy, chap. iii. 15, shewing they were in a gross error to call the proud happy, and God will spare them; but the event should shew the contrary.

*The day that cometh shall burn them up; i. e.* the time that I have appointed, in whose power all times and seasons are, not when men shall think fit or prescribe me.

*And shall leave them neither root nor branch.* An expression noting their utter destruction.

*Doct.* 1. The Lord will destroy and burn up all proud and wicked men.

*Doct.* 2. As the Lord will destroy all wicked men, so specially such as the world takes notice of for jolly and happy fellows, such as grow and increase by their wickedness and unjust dealing. It is David's observation, Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36, and Job's, Job xxiv. 23, 24, and Solomon's, Prov. iii. 35.

*Reason* 1. Because this will more magnify both his justice and power, that he respects not persons in judgment, and that he is able to abase every one that is lifted up.

*Reason* 2. Because this will make him more generally and thoroughly feared than if he smote others, upon whom there is less observation.

*Reason* 3. Because it will more plainly prove his providence and government, whenas in those from whose prosperous estate they made a reason to deny, he manifesteth his providence. So men come to change their judgment, as Acts xxviii. 4, 6.

*Use* 1. This may instruct us, when we see wicked men to grow great in wealth and honour by iniquity, yet not to envy them; for God will destroy them, and the rather because they are great. We can pity poor snakes in misery and poverty, when they have no knowledge nor fear of God, because they must go out of one misery to a greater; yet we are ready to envy the prosperity of others as wicked as they, who sure have as much need of our pity as the other, being rather nearer and surer of punishment, and of sorer; as a rebel or traitor, the greater his wealth and advancement hath been, the greater is his fact, and shall be his punishment.

*Use* 2. To admonish the rich and renowned among men, that they make not those things they enjoy an occasion to harden or hearten them in sin; if they love their own safety, the higher they are, the more holy they ought to be. It were a madness in men who have wealth, therefore to presume to transgress the law without fear, whenas that may sooner bring their lives and estates in question; so it is in this case. 'The proud shall be stubble.'

*Doct.* 3. Wicked men, whatsoever they be, great, honourable, rich, powerful, yet have no power to resist God. So much this similitude sheweth, which is more full in Isa. xxvii. 4, 'Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.' See also Ps. xxxvii. 20, Isa. i. 31, Nah. i. 10. We have many examples of this, in Pharaoh, Ahab, Sennacherib, Herod, and notably in him that was both an example of the point and one that taught it, namely, Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. iv. 30, 32.

*Reason* 1. Because God is most powerful, the Lord of hosts, and hath all creatures at command, to do with them as he list.

*Reason* 2. Because all men are weak compared with him; they are but grasshoppers, Isa. xl. 22, and reputed as nothing, Dan. iv. 35.

*Use* 1. To teach great men not to sin, and promise safety to themselves for their greatness, Isa. ix. 14.

*Use* 2. To admonish the meaner sort to take heed of provoking God; for if the other cannot resist him, how shall they escape? As he fears not the other's power, he will not pity the meanness of these. The fir-tree must howl if the cedar be fallen, if the mighty (or the gallants, as the word is) be spoiled, Zech. xi. 2. Then, as the third captain who was of equal strength with the other two, when he saw them perish, entreated humbly for his life, 2 Kings i. 13, how much more are such to entreat the Lord, who see him abasing more mighty than themselves.

*Use* 3. To instruct mean men, retainers and followers of others, not to commit evil at their command, not to be their bawds and panders, their instruments for blood and uncleanness; for though they may bear them out some time against the law of man, and the execution of human justice, yet not against God. They cannot defend themselves, how should they defend them? If they command, as Absalom did his servants to kill Amnon, upon the confidence of his greatness, 2 Sam. xiii. 23. Yet consider Absalom could not save himself, but was hanged and stricken through with darts.

Ver. 2. *But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, and health shall be under his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as fat calves.*

*But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise.* Here is a second prediction or prophecy, which is touching the godly, and of good things of a spiritual nature. And to them doth he turn his speech, that he did not denounce this terrible day, to afflict the minds of the good, but to terrify the wicked, who shall perish, being contemners of God; but when that shall come, you that fear God, lift up up your heads in peace and hope, for to you shall arise, 'the Sun of righteousness.' Thus the prophet calls Christ after the manner of the prophets, who in diverse places have given him this name: Isa. lx. 1, 2, 19, John viii. 12, Luke i. 78; and he is said to arise unto them, because he doth enlighten them by his word and Spirit. And he is called the Sun of righteousness, being so himself, and making them so, regenerating, purging them from their corruptions, renewing in them the image of God; which things are more particularly expressed by that which follows.

*With healing in his wings.* Keeping the same metaphor, he calleth the sunbeams *wings*, that as by the beams of the sun the air is purged and health procured to men, so Christ should, by his grace and Spirit, purge them whom he enlightens.

*And you shall go forth.* That is, be set at liberty from bondage and slavery, from sin, the devil, and death.

*And grow up as the calves of the stall.* That is, you shall have an increase and augmentation of grace and of the Spirit, more and more, as fat calves; an homely similitude, to make it clearer. Some read 'you shall leap,' but this other the words will well bear, and is as fit.

*Doct.* 1. All men are in themselves darkness, and have no light; that is the estate of every man by nature. The point is only implied.

*Doct.* 2. Christ is risen a sun to as many as are truly called, and they have light, and not darkness; they have the knowledge of God and of his will necessary to salvation.

*Doct.* 3. Christ is most holy and pure, without spot and blemish of sin, a Sun of righteousness.

*Doct.* 4. They who are God's elected and called, have health under the wings of Christ, *i.e.* have their sins purged, their spiritual sores cured, and they made holy and sanctified, 1 Cor. vi. 11, Rom. viii. 10, Gal. v. 24, Eph v. 26, 27.

*Reason* 1. Because they are made one with Christ and joined with him, and so, being in Christ, are new creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17; new in quality and condition, being made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4, as iron put into the fire remains so in the substance, but yet is pulled forth wholly burning like fire. The same substance with the name remaineth; the heat, shining, brightness, other accidents, are not the iron's, but the fire's.

*Reason* 2. Because, as a cause of this, they being one with him must needs partake of his Spirit, and have life from him as members. And this life is holiness; they are sanctified wholly, 1 Thes. v. 23; the mind enlightened with the true knowledge of God, Col. i. 9; the memory keeps and remembers that which is agreeable to God's will, whereas naturally it best remembereth lewdness and vanity, Ps. cxix. 11. The word is hid in the heart; the will is sanctified so far as it is freed from sin, that it can will and choose that which is good and acceptable to God, and refuse that which is evil, Philip. ii. 13. The affections are sanctified, and move to that which is good, to embrace it, and eschew evil, Rom. xii. 9; the body is sanctified when the members are instruments of righteousness, Rom. vi. 13; and all is from Christ, in whom they are, and to whom they are joined. In Christ they have a gracious health of mind, and spirit, and body, who took whole man that he might heal the whole man of all pestilential contagion, as Saint Augustine speaks.* But none hath this holiness in perfection, but in part; and to dream of a perfection is a Pelagian fancy, contrary to

* In Christo habent, &c.—*Aug. de civit. Dei.* lib. x. cap. xxvii.

experience, conscience, our own confessions to God, and to the word of God, that hath taught us that we have but here the first fruits, Rom. viii. 23; and the full measure not accomplished till after death, Col. iii. 4. In the mean time he is in hand with the cure and healing of us, so that the state of the best is clean in part, and yet in part to be made clean, and must hearken to the apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1, to 'cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' knowing they have still an army of vicious desires to fight against, which are the Jebusites who dwell in our borders, and may be subdued, though they cannot be driven out.*

*Use.* This will answer the papists' slander, who affirm in their late pamphlets, and by D. Bishop in his epistle to the king, that we say, that to think of inherent righteousness and to stand just by it before God, is to raze the foundation of religion, and to make Christ a pseudo-Christ. If they understand it of being just imperfectly before God, we none of us deny it; but if as perfect righteousness in God's sight, we say it doth raze the foundation, and jostleth Christ out of his place, and take away from him that honour which the Scripture hath given him, to be called, 'the Lord our righteousness,' Jer. xxxiii. 16, and to defeat the work of God, 'by whom he is made unto us righteousness,' 1 Cor. i. 30. But this is injurious to the inestimable value of Christ's blood. God cloaks our sin now, and cures it too by degrees, and afterward fully. He cloaketh and covereth our iniquity with the righteousness of Christ, which is not a short cloak that cannot cover two, as St Bernard speaks,† but being a large and everlasting righteousness, it will largely cover both thee and me.

They who are elected and called are redeemed; that is, are set at liberty and freed by Christ from sin, Satan, and death, and shall go forth (as the words are here) from sin, Rom. vii. 5, 6, Rom. vi. 6, 14, 1 John iii. 8; from Satan, John xii. 31, Col. i. 13; from death, Heb. ii. 14.

*Reason* 1. Because they are one with Christ, and he having overcome those enemies, and delivered himself, they must needs be freed.

*Reason* 2. Because being one with him, they have his Spirit. 'Now where the Spirit is, there is liberty,' 2 Cor. iii. 17.

*Reason* 3. Because they must and ought to serve him, whose they are; that is, God, which they cannot do, if still they be servants to sin and Satan; for if no man can serve two masters (Mat. vi. 24), who may in some case be subordinate to one another, how may they serve such as are so far opposite, God and sin?

*Reason* 4. Because God hath shewed mercy to pardon their sin; but to what end were that mercy, if he should leave them in their former bondage? As if one should pay the ransom of a captive, and yet leave him still in thraldom.

* St Bern. in Cant. serm. lviii. † Bern in Cant. lxi.

*Obj.* We see many of them who are partakers of this redemption, yet are still overcome of sin, and are led captive to transgress the commandment, as St Paul was, Rom. vii.

*Ans.* Falling into sin doth no way prove the dominion of sin. Sin hath dominion when it reigns in a man, and when man rebels not, strives not against it, but is ruled by it. But when sin is, as St Cyprian speaks,* as a raging beast, yet tied and chained up in the utmost passages of the soul; or as Epiphanius,† as a root sprouting out weeds, yet still nipped and checked that they cannot have their growth; then sin reigns not, so that though by reason of this remainder of sin man be greatly hindered, that he cannot do the thing he would, yet the thing that prevaileth in him is a will and desire of righteousness, hungering and thirsting after it, the drift and purpose of his life tending wholly to it. It is grievous to him that he fails, and makes him cry out, Rom. vii. 27, 'O wretched man,' &c.

*Obj.* Those are still assaulted by Satan, and hotly pursued by him, so that they are nowhere free from his temptations, therefore not freed.

*Ans.* It is a sign they are the rather freed, not because they are tempted, but because they are so hotly pursued, and have the feeling of them, which before they had not; and as Cyprian speaks, the devil is therefore more fierce, because overcome, and would fain conquer his conqueror; so that though he go about like a roaring lion, 1 Peter v. 9, yet they are able to resist him stedfast in the faith, and so armed with the coat-armour of God's Spirit, and his grace, that though he may by violence now and then foil them, yet doth he not overcome them and lead them captive; but the more he assaults, the more are they enabled to repel him and resist his forces, for they prove like a city that hath been once besieged, but not sacked; ever after it will be better able to resist the like forces, yea, greater, because they will fortify the walls and breaches, and increase their munition and strength. It falls out with men that enjoy their lands in peace and security, they look not into their evidences, only keep them in a box or chest; but if any man lay claim to the least part, and would wrest it from them, then will they with diligence seek them forth, and look them over, and consult with lawyers, whereby they are able to answer the plea of the adversaries. So it is with the spiritual estate; Satan (as Chrysostom speaks) when he sees he can do nothing, either presently desists, fearing lest he become a cause of more glory to us; or if he do continue, it is but to be revenged of them by troubling and vexing them, whom he cannot overcome; so that his assaults prove that they are freed from him, as Pharaoh's pursuing of Israel shewed they had escaped.

*Obj.* These still die; how are they then freed from it?

*Ans.* They neither are nor can be free, because the

* Cypr. de circums. † Epiph. in hæres. lxiv.

sentence is unchangeable, Heb. ix. 27, but they are freed from the dominion and tyranny of death, yea, from the hurt and evil that comes by it; nay, it is made to bring them many benefits. It frees them from, first, the afflictions and miseries of this life, yea, though it seem to come unto them somewhat untimely. 'The righteous is taken away from the evil to come, he shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds,' Isa. lvii. 1, 2, 1 Kings xiv. 13. Secondly, from the fellowship of wicked men, who vex their souls, as the Sodomites did righteous Lot's. Thirdly, they are freed by it from sin. Death is found to be profitable to the faithful, because it frees a man from the danger of sinning, and puts him into a security of not sinning, saith St Augustine. So that, in bringing death, is by death destroyed, as the viper of her brood. Death had never entered but by sin, and sin had never ended but by death. Fourthly, they are freed from the assaults of Satan and the world; for they by it do not only fly into the wilderness to be free for many days, as the church, Rev. xii. 6, but as the words are in the fifth verse, they are caught up unto God, and to his throne; and so as favourites pursued are safe when they are in the court, specially in the presence chamber, so much more here. Besides these freedoms, it brings great benefits. First, it is their passage into the presence of God, where is fulness of joy; an unpleasant gate, but to a princely palace. Secondly, it is an herald that fetches them to their glory and crowning, from these earthly cottages, 2 Cor. v. 1. Thirdly, it restores our bodies more holy and pure unto us. At length, then, what is death? It is no more than to put off one's coat; the body is as a garment, and we lay it off but for a while by death, to put it on again afresh.

*Use.* It is comfort to as many as find and feel the assaults of Satan and sin, tempting, and fighting, and rebelling in him, but not reigning or ruling in him; or though sometime foiling him, yet not leading him captive, Rom. vi. 12, 13. Such may have comfort that they are redeemed by Christ: 'Free, indeed, because the Son hath made them,' John viii. 36. They must not measure their freedom, and so their comforts, by feeling no assaults; for as Jerome to Heliodorus, then thou art most dangerously assaulted, when thou knowest not that thou art assaulted. We have to fight, saith St Cyprian (*de mortalit.*), with covetousness, with unchastity, with wrathfulness, with ambition, with carnal vices, and with the enticements of the world. Hereupon, saith St Augustine, (lib. ii. *contr. Julian.*), God forbid that we should think holy Cyprian to have been covetous, because he fought with covetousness; or wrathful, or ambitious, or carnal, or a lover of this world, because he fought with them; nay, therefore was he none of these, because he fought and strongly resisted these evil motions.

*Healing under his wings.* It implies sickness among men.

*Doct.* Every man naturally of himself, and by himself, is sick, full of diseases and sores; that is, of sins and corruptions, and of all spiritual diseases, Ps. li. 5, Ezek. xvi., Rom. iii. 10, &c., Eph. ii. 3. And of every person may that be spoken which is spoken of the whole people, Isa. i. 6, 'From the sole of the foot to the head there is no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.'

*Reason* 1. Because of natural parents who communicate their sin and nature, and 'beget in their own likeness,' Gen. v. 3, and so, 'that that is born of flesh is flesh,' John iii. 6. It is propagated more than any natural disease, and outgrows nature, for we find children sinning before they can either go or speak.

*Reason* 2. Because they are without Christ, who is life; as the body without the soul, so is the soul without Christ. The soul departed, the body is possessed of stink, corruption, rottenness, worms, horror, and becomes detestable; so without Christ, the soul is full of the stench of guilt, the corruption and rottenness of sin, the worm of conscience, the horror of infidelity. (So Chrysologus.)

*Reason* 3. Because they are not regenerate; then that is true, Rom. vii. 18, 'In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.' And if no good, then much evil; for there is no *medium* twixt these, which are more opposite than health and sickness.

*Use* 1. To let every man see what he is by nature, as blind and darkness, so unholy, and sickness, full of corruption and uncleanness.

*Use* 2. This may teach us why men can so hardly endure the ministry of the word, specially that which reproves and threatens, why they account the ministers grievous and offensive to them, and their enemies rather than friends, which labour to reform them. It is because sin and corruption is natural to them; and men can hardly endure to have a natural sore, defect or infirmity, pointed at, or noted, much less to be dealt withal, when it is not to be cured or removed without force, without sharp medicines, cutting or searing, or the like. Is it any wonder it should be so here, when to deal with sin is like pulling out a right eye, or cutting off an arm; specially when custom is added to nature, and pleasure and profit to both? This makes them, when they hear of sin, not to entertain it as an admonition, but to shun it as a reproach, and receive such, not as physicians that would cure them, but as enemies that would kill them.

*Use* 3. The reason why they account the law and commandments of God such a burden, and the obedience of them so tedious, is, because they are sick men, and want health, and we know small things are burdensome to the sick. St Paul complains, though he was in health, and had an inward man, Rom. vii. 22, 23, much more such as have nothing but the outward and the carnal man.

*And ye shall go forth.* If Christ bring liberty, it intimates a bondage before.

*Doct.* Every man naturally is a slave, in captivity and bondage to Satan, sin, and death: Rom. vii. 14, 'Carnal, and sold under sin;' Rom. vi. 16, 'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey;' John xii. 31, 'The devil is the prince of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'the god of this world,' 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'who takes men captive at his will.'

*Reason* 1. Because they serve and obey sin, then they must needs be in subjection to it, especially when the service they do is willing: John viii. 34, 'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.' So Rom. vi. 16, and 2 Peter ii. 19, 'They are the servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.'

*Reason* 2. Because if they be slaves to sin, then to Satan also; for sin is the work of Satan; and also to death, for 'by sin, death entered into the world,' Rom. v. 12. Sin the only cause (saith one), which enlargeth death's dominions, and made all the world to become his tributaries. Adam had not died, had he not sinned.

*Use* 1. This will teach us and warrant us what to judge of those men, whom we shall hear, if any man speak of liberty and freedom, to challenge it as much as any, like those, John viii. 33, 'We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage.' And yet they live very profanely and wickedly, no iniquity subdued, but sin reigning, and they subjects to their corruption, yea, captives to their lusts, uncleanness, ambition, pride, anger, &c. When they are masters of families, magistrates of cities, captains of bands, colonels of fields, generals of armies, commanders of countries, yea, princes, yet one base, ambitious, or covetous, or voluptuous lust doth rule over them. Miserable slaves! And if they feel not this, their bondage is the greater; sin and Satan have the surer possession, when things all are at peace. The captivity is more dangerous, the more willing, as the malignity of poison is never the less, though it be sweet, if yet it be poison.

*Use* 2. This will confute the doctrine of popery, who teach that man hath free will to good, or (to use Bellarmine's words) that a man may do things morally good, and keep or fulfil the law, according to the substance of the things prescribed, without the help and assistance of special grace. But how should this be, if he be the slave of sin? We deny not to any man free will, for else we should make him no man. But we must understand that free will is either good or evil, and so according to the distinction of Bernard. All that have free will but to evil, are their own and Satan's; all that have free will and to good, are God's. Gregorius Ariminensis is express, that to affirm that man by his natural strength, without the special help of God, can do any virtuous action, or morally good, is one of the damnable heresies of Pelagius; or if in anything it differ from his heresy, it is further from truth.

*And grow up as young calves.* A further benefit promised of growing up and increasing in grace and sanctification daily by degrees.

*Doct.* They who are God's elect and called, shall grow up and increase in graces, as in faith, hope, love, and such like. As the waters of the sanctuary, they shall rise higher: Ezek. xlvii., 'They are branches in Christ that bear fruit, and are purged that they may bear more fruit.' John xv. 2, Philip. i. 6, James ii. 5, 1 Cor. i. 4, 5.

*Reason* 1. Because he will restore in them by Christ that which was lost in Adam, and by him his image of righteousness and holiness; therefore shall they increase and grow up towards it, which must be got again in long time and divers progress, though it were lost in a moment.

*Reason* 2. Because some doubt else may be, whether their graces they have be true sanctified graces, which generally ever increase, though some let there may be, as a temptation or some sin; but they do recover themselves and increase after the more, as fire kept down, Mat. xxv. 21, 26.

*Use* 1. This may put many a man to a *quære* with himself, and his own soul, if he increase not, but rather go backward, and thrive not under good means, but shame their master, as if they had no good food, like the blasted ears and lean kine, that Pharaoh dreamed of. These may fear themselves, that if they approve themselves in this condition, and think all is well with them, they are not right; but if they dislike their dulness and backwardness in profiting and growing on in sanctification, if they bewail their wants, and earnestly use the means, they may be persuaded that what God hath begun he will perform in them to the end; and that he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.

*Use* 2. To persuade every one to endeavour to go forward, and to grow in grace and piety, as the wicked grow worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13, Philip. iii. 13, 14. To press forward, like runners in a race, who look not how much they have run, but how much remaineth. Upon which place St Augustine, he had said, I am not already perfect, and yet afterward he saith, as many as be perfect; perfect, and yet not perfect; perfect travellers, but yet not perfect comprehenders. Let it always be displeasing unto thee to be as thou art; if thou meanest to attain at length to that which yet thou art not,—for when thou thinkest well of thyself, thou goest no further; but if thou sayest it is well, thou art undone,—forget what is past, look not back, lest thou stayest where thou now art. Remember Lot's wife.

Ver. 3. *And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be dust under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.*

*And ye shall tread down the wicked.* The last thing promised to those that belong to God, is victory over their enemies. A comfortable promise to them that were

oppressed and under the wind, that God would change the condition, and make them now aloft, and the other under. It is usual with the Lord, when he promiseth redemption and comforts to his, to join also a prophecy of the destruction of their enemies, lest they should be grieved with too much emulation at their present prosperity. Thus God works patience in them, seeing he would give them after a while cause of triumph over their enemies, and that they shall be the Lord's ministers to act this judgment, *You shall tread down the wicked*, they shall be made your footstool; and it is added, *they shall be as dust*, or ashes, shewing their utter and ignominious destruction.

*In the day that I shall do this.* Which noteth the time spoken to restrain their desires, who, haply hearing it, would be carried headlong with it in their desires for it; therefore by this they are taught to wait with patience, till the time come when God will effect it. And this day is partly in this life, but fully and perfectly in the other, when they shall with Christ judge the wicked and tread upon them.

*Doct.* 1. The Lord he often descendeth to the infirmities of his, to let them see their desire upon his and their enemies for his sake, and to see their ruin and destruction. See a like point to this, chap. i. 5, 'Your eyes shall see it.'

*Doct.* 2. The Lord ofttimes destroys the wicked, enemies of him and his church, by the hands of his church, and by their means. 'Ye shall tread,' &c.

Ver. 4. *Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, in all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.*

*Remember the law of Moses my servant.* Here is the second part of this chapter, the precept commanding their reading and remembering the law; because from hence they were to have no more prophets till Christ's coming, when John should be his forerunner; and, therefore, when they were without prophets, they must give the more diligence to read and be exercised in the law, and to submit themselves to the doctrine of piety therein contained. Now, by naming the law, he doth not exclude the prophets and prophecies that were written, his own and others, but rather including them as commentaries of the law, and interpreters of Moses. So he leaves them not to their own imaginations, but restrains them to that which was left written, as being sufficient to direct and govern them.

*My servant.* Moses was not the author of the law, but only the instrument of bringing it. Therefore it is added,

*Which I commanded unto him.* He was only God's minister to utter what he would have him deliver.

*In Horeb.* The place where the law was given, which some think to signify the mount Sinai; others think by both is meant one hill, which in respect of that part which lay towards the east, was called Horeb; of that towards the west, Sinai; and of this place the prophet rather speaketh, that he may make them call to mind the great majesty of God, which he shewed in that place at the giving of the law.

*To all Israel.* He noteth the persons to whom he gave it, even to themselves, to make them the rather to regard it, and obey it above others, Ps. cxlvii. 20. And he saith *to all*, that no man might exempt himself; whether learned or unlearned, base or noble, male or female, all ought to attend to it and remember it.

*With the statutes and judgments.* This he speaks the rather to commend this care to them, seeing the law is for their profit and good, and containeth in it all directions for public affairs, to teach men to carry themselves in all conditions.

*Doct.* 1. The people of God must remember the whole law, the minister to teach it and deliver it to the people, and they to receive, learn, and know it. *Vide* chap. ii. 6.

*Doct.* 2. The people of God must remember this wholly and only.

*Doct.* 3. The people of God must read, know, and be exercised in the law. This extent, and all these degrees, are contained in the word *remember*. It is the character of the blessed man, Ps. i. 2; it was David's prayer and practice, Ps. cxix.; and Christ requires it, John v. 39; and St Paul, Col. iii. 16.

*Reason* 1. Because some are such as must teach others, and ought to do it, Deut. vii. 7. No man can teach another what he knows not himself.

*Reason* 2. Because they cannot without it preserve themselves from sin, ignorance being the fountain of sin, which made the Hebrews call all sins *ignorances;* for not knowing sin, they can no more avoid it than the bird that sees not the snare; but the knowledge of the word will secure and preserve them, Prov. vii. 1–5.

*Reason* 3. Because whatsoever is done in obedience of God cannot be good if it want knowledge, though it proceed from zeal, charity, devotion, or good intention; it is, howsoever, but a blind sacrifice, condemned, Mal. i. 8.

Uses of this point, see chap. i. 8.

Ver. 5. *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and fearful day of the Lord.*

*Behold, I will send you Elijah.* The third prophecy in this chapter, touching the coming of John the Baptist, of his office, and the fruit the church should have by him, in this verse and the last.

In this verse we have his sending, and in it we observe by whom, and who is sent, his name and office, and, thirdly, the time when.

*I will send.* This is here spoken of God the Father, which, chap. iii. 1, was spoken of the Son; and to the Father it is also applied, Mat. xi. 10.

*Elijah the prophet.* Not that Elijah who was taken up in a fiery chariot, but John Baptist, who is here

called Elijah, for the similitude of his mind and manners, his graces, gifts, and office. If we admit an heavenly interpreter to tell us the meaning, Luke i. 17, or Christ, Mat. xvii. 10–12, who told his disciples that Elias was come; and we read in the next verse, ver. 13, that 'the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.' Yet Christ revealed it at another time more plainly: Mat. xi. 13, 14, 'All the prophets prophesied till John; and this is Elias which was for to come.'

The papists understand this of the true Elijah, and that he shall come again in person. Ribera hath three reasons for it:* *First*, The authority of Chrysostom, Augustine, Ambrose, Theodoret, Cyril, Aquinas, &c. We answer, one angel is more than all these, especially Christ, who is our sole doctor, and hath otherwise interpreted. *Secondly*, The Septuagint, instead of *prophet*, reads *Thesbite*. We answer that the original is *prophet;* so Ribera himself confesses, and so the king of Spain's Bible hath it. Must we then reform the fountain by the channel, or this by that? *Thirdly*, His third reason is from the last words of the verse, 'lest I come,' &c., which are, he saith, understood of the second coming of Christ, because his first coming was to save, not to judge or destroy. I answer, It is not Christ that speaks these words, but the Father, who, verse 3, was called 'The Lord of hosts,' a title not given to Christ. And the words are not meant of the destruction of the wicked at the last judgment, but of God's plaguing them in this life, for contemning of Christ, as their own Montanus doth also interpret it. Bellarmine also would prove it as Ribera doth, that the words refer to Christ's second coming, because that day is called 'great and fearful,' whereas Christ's first coming is acceptable, and a day of salvation. I answer, that Christ's second coming, in respect of no other thing, nor to any other persons, is great and fearful than his first coming is, and *è contra*, for his second coming, to his own, is a day of salvation, and they are bid to lift up their heads when it approaches; but to the wicked both the first and second coming are fearful, and full of horror. Therefore Montanus interprets it thus: the day is great in respect of the good, and dreadful in respect of the wicked, resembling this place to that of John, Mat. iii. 12.

But the reason why the papists contend it should be the true Elijah, is because they prove that the pope is not antichrist. This is one of Sanders his great demonstrations to prove it, because Elijah must resist antichrist, but Elijah is not yet come to do it. *Ergo*, but what prophet, what apostle, what scripture ever told them any such thing? Papal traditions will leave nothing unknown; they tell us things wherein God's Spirit is silent, they tell us the soldier's name who pierced Christ, the thieves' name who were crucified with Christ, the host's name in whose house he celebrated the supper, and the names of the two witnesses, Rev. xi. 3, to be Enoch and Elias, if we will believe them; but their folly is made manifest to all that will see.

* Riber. *in loc.*

*Before the coming*, &c. Here is the time when Elias shall come, immediately before Christ's coming; that is, his first coming, which, though it may seem to be described contrary when it is said to be acceptable and gracious, yet this is spoken in respect of divers parties; that whereas there were some that contemned and made no account of the mercies of Christ, to them it should be a dreadful day, but to the godly acceptable and gracious.

*Doct.* The coming of Christ is very terrible to all natural, wicked, and impenitent men; that is, his preaching of the word, whether in his own person or by his ministers. So Isa. xi. 4, 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked;' which is again repeated, Rev. ii. 16. And by his ministers he doth it, 2 Thes. ii. 8, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

*Reason* 1. Because he brings them by this to the sight of sin, Rom. iii. 20, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, and so makes them to see, though unwillingly, how ugly and filthy lepers they are, how defiled in nature, in soul, body, mind, will, affections, in word, deed, actions, which must needs trouble them and strike terror into them.

*Reason* 2. Because by this he brings them to the sense of that punishment which is due for sin, so that though the sight of sin last no longer than they are looking into the glass that discover them, yet the sense of the punishment may terrify them.

*Obj.* By this he also troubles his own, and the most penitent, as we see, Acts iii. 37, 38.

*Ans.* He doth so when he first brings them to repentance, or after, when they grow secure; but the difference is, that in these it is to salvation, in the other, to their greater damnation and hardening.

Other things which might be observed here are already noted, chap. iii. 1.

Ver. 6. *And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with cursing.*

*And he shall turn the heart of the fathers.* In this verse is described the end of John's coming before Christ, his office, which is to convert the hearts of the fathers to the children, and to bring them to an holy union of faith, to work repentance in all, and to turn them from iniquity to the living God.*

*He shall turn.* He shall be my instrument to turn or convert men; speaking honourably of the ministry of the word, to shew how powerful it is when he worketh with it. The ministers then convert when they

* *Vide* brevem expos. hujus versus, apud D. Abbot. Antich. Demonstr. cap. vi. p. 133.

are co-workers with God, 1 Cor. iv. 15, 1 Cor. xv. 10, but prevail not when he denies assistance, 1 Cor. iii. 7.

*The heart of the fathers to*, &c. St Augustine and Jerome, by *the fathers*, understand Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets; and by *children*, the Jews. When by the preaching of John the Jews should believe in Christ, in whom the fathers had believed, then should their fathers' hearts be turned and affected towards them, which otherwise were averse from them. Some understand by *fathers* the Jews, and by *children* the apostles and other Christians, according to that Ps. xlv. 16. And when the Jews were converted by Elias, to believe as the Christians did, then were the fathers and children of one mind, consenting in one truth. But some understand by them all ages, orders, degrees of men, meaning that John should execute his office with the like authority, gravity, and power towards all, and shall have and see the fruit of his labours in all sorts; and so it is interpreted, Luke i. 17, that John when he came should find many dissensions, many strange opinions and dotages, but he should gather them to God, and bring them from those dissensions to true unity, that they may grow together in one faith.

*Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.* These words menace as many as resisted John's ministry. There were among this people many obstinate and wilful, who had need of this rousing and awakening; a threatening also, not only against particular men, but to destroy the whole nation of the Jews, by famine, pestilence, war, and exile.

*Doct.* 1. Repentance is wrought by the preaching of the word. *Vide* chap. iii. 7.

*Doct.* 2. The ministry of the word works upon all, old, young, rich, poor, noble, base, &c. This was manifest by John's preaching, Mat. iii. 5, Luke iii. 10, &c.; by Paul's, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. We read of 'noble Theophilus,' Luke i. 1; of the shopkeeper, Acts xvi. 24; of the jailor, ver. 34; of the devout Greeks and the honourable women, Acts xvii. 4; and of the elect lady, 2d Epistle of John.

*Reason* 1. Because God hath decreed to save of all sorts some; then must the word needs work upon them, it being the means of salvation, 1 Tim. ii. 4.

*Reason* 2. Because that when he converts by it the wise, rich, and mighty, he might shew his power and the power of the word in the weakness of man, 1 Cor. i. 25, when by it he shall make them account their wisdom folly, &c.

*Reason* 3. Because when he calls of all sorts, it might appear that when they are not wrought upon, it is not their state and condition that doth hinder them, as if God had given it them to snare them, but it is from the corruption of their own hearts who abuse them, seeing others their equals are converted.

*Use.* To encourage the ministers in the diversity of their hearers, as different in conditions as complexions, in hearts as faces, yet to go on and deliver the word with faithfulness, expecting that the Lord shall make it profitable to the saving, though not of all, yet of some of all sorts; that as he wrought effectually in Peter towards the circumcision, and was mighty in Paul towards the Gentiles, Gal. ii. 8, so he will this day be powerful to some of the rich, the next to some of the poor; this Lord's day to one of honour, the next haply to one in disgrace and vile; to all according to the pleasure of his own working.

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END OF STOCK ON MALACHI.

# TORSHELL ON MALACHI.

NOBILISSIMO AC HONORATISSIMO DOMINO,

# D. EDOUARDO, COMITI DORSET, BARONI DE BUCKHURST,

SERENISSIMÆ DOMINÆ REGINÆ DOMINO CAMERARIO, PRÆNOBILIS ORDINIS PERISCELIDIS MILITI, ET SERENISSIMO DOMINO REGI CAROLO, A CONCILIIS SECRETIORIBUS:

DEPURATÆ ELOQUENTIÆ FACILE PRINCIPI: INGENUORUM OMNIUM STUDIORUM FAUTORI, MÆCENATI DIGNISSIMO:

IN OMNIBUS NEGOTIIS AD HONOREM REGIUM AC SALUTEM PUBLICAM SPECTANTIBUS, VIGILANTISSIMO AC PRUDENTISSIMO CONSILIARIO:

HAS EXERCITATIONES IN PROPHETAM MALACHIAM,

UT EXILE QUIDEM, AT DEVOTUM TAMEN, PERPETUÆ OBSERVANTIÆ ET MAXIMI OBSEQUII TESTIMONIUM,

D.D.D.

Sacellanus ejus indignus, humillimus Servus,

SAMUEL TORSHEL.

# TO THE READER.

IT was not choice, but occasion, that cast me upon this subject. Having the original notes of the sermons of that reverend, learned, and godly divine, Mr Richard Stock, upon this prophet Malachi, entrusted into my hands, and upon perusal of them finding many necessary points most wholesomely treated of, I thought it too great an injury both to his name and to the public, to make them only mine, and to keep them to mine own use; and therefore I resolved (not without the judgment and approbation of other men) to communicate them unto the use of others. But, withal, observing that his aim being only the edification of a popular audience, he had only endeavoured to apply the text to the condition of his present hearers; and had left somewhat to be done to make it a complete Commentary, I set myself to examine the original, to confer translations, to inquire into the several glosses and expositions of the ancients and moderns; and have thereupon made up what you see, by way of exercitation. Not out of any opinion of mine own ability, or an ambition to be upon the stall, or out of any more peculiar delight that I take in this kind of study, which yet is a study most worthy of a divine, and which may exercise the most able; especially these more difficile pieces, I mean the prophecies, which according to the Hieroglyphic of prophecy, which, they say, doth hang among other pictures in the Vatican library at Rome, are like matrons with their eyes covered. In regard of which difficulty it was, that Paulinus, bishop of Nola (a man much commended by St Augustine and St Jerome, and one that had not any resolution against writing, for he wrote other tracts as verses and epistles), would not be drawn to write commentaries, though he were entreated by many of his friends, as deeming himself unworthy, though he were indeed very able. I commend his spirit, though I follow not his example, and I have given you the excuse above.

I have everywhere followed the grammatical, which is the lawful and genuine sense* of Scripture. Men have been too wanton with allegories. Origen, St Ambrose, St Jerome himself, and others of the ancients, have been blamed for it by learned men. It were easy to multiply instances, but it were needless. I have also sought the most proper grammatical sense, not always the first, but the most agreeable to the nature of the context; which, while it hath not been observed, many absurd interpretations have been made. Corn. à Lapide* saith, he heard one preach, that Moses died kissing of God, because of that place, Deut. xxxiv. 5, 'He died upon the mouth of the Lord;' not observing the use of that phrase among the Hebrews, which also the Septuagint, the Chaldee, the vulgar Latin, our English, and (for aught I know) all interpreters do express, 'He died according to the word of the Lord.' But I will not enlarge myself here, because I speak unto the point in the epistle before Mr Stock's Commentary. I will only request this of the learned reader (if any such shall vouchsafe to bestow his eye so meanly), that he make a favourable judgment of what defect or other blemish he may discern in a work of this nature, which could not be smoothly wrought, nor wrought in all things to mine own satisfaction, having the use of no books but mine own, and living almost an hundred miles from any public library. Yet, such as I have, I have not neglected to consult; willing to cast off that untrue and slanderous aspersion which Francis Ribera† hath thrown upon protestant interpretators, that they read not the commentaries of the holy fathers, but being furnished with some poor measure of knowledge in the tongues,‡ they read the Scripture as if they were to read Livy or Cicero.

Whatsoever it is that I have done in this, I submit it to the censure of this Church of England, of which I am a part and member, and in which I make my daily prayers unto almighty God, that truth and peace may still be maintained, and that she may still flourish with prosperity and reputation, notwithstanding the ill will and ill opinion of all sorts round about her.

S. T.

* Iac. Armin. Disp. priv. Thes. ix.

* Corn. a Lap. proleg. in proph. min.

† Riber. Com. in Hos. 13, Num. 12.

‡ Sed vide Guil. Perkinsi propheticam, cap. 3.

# AN EXERCITATION UPON THE PROPHECY OF MALACHI.

—o—

IN the whole book of Malachi, which seems to be but one prophecy or sermon, we may (without any prejudice of others, whose opinions the reader may see in *John Tarnovius in Mal. proleg.* vi.) observe as the parts of it,

First, The inscription or the preface, ver. 1.

Secondly, The prophecy itself, ver. 2, &c., *ad fin. proph.*

1. The inscription or the preface. Ver. 1, *The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi*, which is the title or head of the whole prophecy; wherein we have,

First, The subject: *The burden of the word.*

Secondly, The circumstances of the persons.

1. From whom: *the Lord.*

2. To whom: *to Israel.*

3. By whom, *by Malachi.*

I. The subject or the subject matter of the whole book, *The burden of the word*; so our last translation, the Geneva English, the Italian of Deodate,* Montan, Winkleman. *The prophecy*, so Pagnin and Piscator. *The burdensome prophecy*, so Tremellius. The word is משא, the root in Hebrew, *nasa*, signifies *to lift*, or *take up, to carry, to bear.* According to which we have a phrase in Scripture, 'to take up a proverb.' And so whereas the Septuagint sometimes renders the word ῥῆμα, *verbum, the word*, sometimes χρηματισμὸς, the *oracle* or *divine answer*, sometimes ὅρασις, *the vision*; here they render it λῆμμα λόγου, *the assumption*, or *lifting*, or *taking up the word of the Lord*; and they have expressed the original, 'The lifting up of the word against Israel;' though the Greeks use the word λῆμμα, and especially the Latins, in another sense, among whom *lemma* is that word or short sentence, which is lifted up upon the head of the discourse, to be the title or summary argument of the rest.

* Il carico.

So the titles of *Epigrams* are called *Lemmata*, as in Martial, *Epigr.* lib. xiv.

> Lemmata si quæras cur sint adscripta, docebo;
> Ut si malueris, Lemmata sola legas.
>
> If why the titles are o'er-writ, you ask; I say,
> The titles only if you'd rather read, you may.

And in another place,

> Vivida componis epigrammata, mortua ponis
> Lemmata . . .
>
> The epigrams thou dost compose are quick, but dull
> The titles are . . .

Much unto which purpose we usually call the *versus intercalaris*, or the foot of the ditty which ordinarily contains and repeats the chief sum, the *burden* in the song. But we must find more in the use and application of the word *burden* here. The burden of the whole prophecy is against and upon Israel; or, the inscription, title, head, or argument of this prophecy carries its signification with it. It is a burden taken up at the command of God by the prophet, to be laid upon Israel, to crush them, to make them sensible of their sin and God's wrath. And therefore the Tigurine translation (though it have, as the French* also hath, mistaken the particle אל, which usually signifies *ad, to;* and so both our English translations have it, according to most other translators, *to Israel*, and never, † as I can find, *contra, against*) hath expressed unto us the meaning of the prophet's phrase, in rendering it, 'The burden against Israel;' and our old English authorised, before this last, for the church, hath a marginal note (which short notes were made before those of Geneva) which gives us the same meaning, 'the burden;' that is, 'The grievous and threatening prophecy laid upon them as a burden.' So in

* La charge contre Israel.

† See Schindler pentagl. in verbo אלה.

2 Kings ix. 25, where the words are, *nasa eth hammassa*, which Schindler renders, 'He lift up that prophecy against him.' And so also Drusius, *lect. in Nahum* i. 1, that we have in our last translation, 'The Lord laid this burden upon him.'

Secondly, the circumstances of the persons.

I. The author, from whom: *the Lord. The burden of the word of the Lord.* There is no difficulty in the words, but for the emergent questions hence; one, that this book is canonical, and from the Lord, I refer the reader to the commentary; another, that prophesying or divining is not natural, I refer to Cornel. à Lapide, *Canones in min. proph.* Can. 21; and to a much larger discourse of it in Gabr. Pennot., *Propug. hum. libert.*, lib. x. cap. 7, 8, 11.

II. The object, to whom: *to Israel.* The Jews returned from the captivity, principally Judah and Benjamin, with such of the ten tribes as were dispersed among them, to which ten tribes the name of Israel did properly and solely belong after the schism made by Jeroboam, and till the captivity; but after that, the names of Israel and Judah were used alike, and chiefly, if not solely, for the two other tribes of Judah and Benjamin; an observation that will give light to many places. Of the name Israel, the divers absurd derivations of it among the fathers, and the true and genuine original of it, see Sixtin. Amama in his *Antibarb. Bibl.*, p. 428, 429, ad Gen. xxxii. 28.

III. The minister, by whom: *by Malachi*, or *by the hand*, or *in the hand of Malachi*, or, as the French, *by the means* of Malachi.* That is, by the ministry of Malachi, by his mouth, the mouth being called the hand by a catachresis, see Exod. ix. 35, 'As the Lord spake by the hand of Moses,' *i.e.* by his mouth, Num. iv. 37, 45. Accordingly, the spirit of prophecy in the mouth of the prophets is called 'the hand of the Lord:' 2 Kings iii. 15, יד יהוה, 'the hand of the Lord' (which the Targum renders 'the spirit of prophecy from the Lord') 'came upon him;' Isa. viii. 11, 'The Lord spake to me with a strong hand' (or in the strength of hand), 'and instructed me.'

*By Malachi*, מלאכי. Tremellius reads it *Maleaci*. Piscator well finds fault with that, because *caph* having not a point in the belly of it, sounds as *ch*, and reads *Maleachi*, and so Montanus. The Vulgar *Malachias*, both our English *Malachi*. For the signification of it, לאך, and thence *Maleach*, is the same that ἄγγελος, *angel*, is in the Greek; that is, a *messenger*, or one that is sent. Minshieu interprets it 'the angel of the Lord,' compounding it of *Malach* and *Jah* upon a mistake, and mistaking his author too, for he cites Isidore. The place he means, though he name it not, is lib. vii. cap. 8; and the words there, though somewhat obscure, seem to me to carry another meaning; for, following the reading of the LXX, he gives that sense of the word that they do; not *the messenger* or *angel of the Lord*, but ἄγγελος μου, *my angel*, which etymon also Jerome gives in his preface to Joel, where he derives the names of all the prophets; and he is followed not only by the composer of the table of proper names to the Geneva, and by Rob. F. Herrey, the corrector and enlarger of that table printed with our authorised translation, but our last translators also themselves have so rendered the very same word into English in the text of Isa. xlii. 19, 'Who is deaf (כמלאכי) as my messenger.'

But to leave this, the greatest ado is, who this Malachi should be.

First, the LXX (as was said) turn it *my angel*, which reading, as the ancients generally follow, so Origen took thence an occasion to conceive that it was an heavenly angel in human conversation whom God employed; and Tertullian seems to be of that opinion.

2. But it is more generally received, and upon better grounds, that he was a man. 1. Some say some man of another name, and called an angel for his office' sake, and because of his eminency. The Jews, some of them think he was Mordecai, some that he was Zechariah, some (as Deodate notes, because of that Hag. i. 13) that he was Haggai, but the most of them that he was Ezra, according to Buxtorfius *in comment. Masoretico*, cap. 3, who having set down Elias Levita his preface in Hebrew rhythm, beginning, *Aala Eezra hu Malachi*,* upon occasion of that quotes R. David *in loc.*, affirming it to be the general opinion. Yet see in his tenth chapter, Abarbanel and Maimonides alleged, who seem to be of another mind, reckoning Malachi and Ezra as distinct men in the catalogue of the heads of the great synagogue. But the most are, that he was the same with Ezra, a man indeed very eminent, who, though he were not high priest, was next in dignity, and of great authority both with his own and the Persians, of notable sanctity, and of that age that he saw both temples (see the learned bishop of Chichester, now of Norwich, his *Apparatus ad Orig. Eccles.*, app. vi. sect. 23) being born to Saraiah before the captivity, as appears Ezra vii. 1, compared with 2 Kings xxv. 18, 21, and returned into the land about the 130th year of his age, about the time of this prophecy, where he dealt also in the same subject, and against the same corruptions; which was one argument that led the Jews, and after them St Jerome, Remigius, Rupertus, and of late Ribera the pontifician, and our Peter Martyr (*Loc. Commun.*, claus. 3, cap. 15, sect. 48) to be of that conceit that he was Ezra, or at least that it is probable, as Luc. Osiander and David Pareus (*proleg.* 1, *ad Hos.*). Who would see the reasons (such as they are) for this opinion, I refer him to the following commentary, where they are also answered. Secondly, I follow those that take this name of Malachi to be the prophet's own proper name; and so besides that Aben Ezra, quoted by Buxtorfius in the place recited, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Theodoret,

* Par le moyen de Malachie.

* Ezra went up, the same is Malachi.

Augustine, Lyranus, Vatablus, Montanus, and Genebrard too, though he speak obscurely, (*Chro.* p. 180, 4), distinguish Ezra and this prophet. It seems also to be so taken by the Apocryphal Ezra, lib. ii. cap. 1, ver. 40, who reckons his name among the other prophets, and then adds the signification of it; for I assent not unto Junius his reading and his note upon the place, which the reader may see. After the captivity, as they brought with them from Babylon the names of angels, not proper names (as Jacob Bonfrerius discourseth it, *comment. in Judic.* cap. 13, ver. 17, where he purposely handles the question, whether angels have any names), but of their office, as Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, so it is likely they might more usually call their sons angels, that manner of language seeming to be very ordinary with them; and our prophet oft useth it, so he calls the priest, chap. ii. 7, and Christ, chap. iii. 1, and John Baptist, in the same verse. It was his name, and I suppose given him, not by the people (as Epiphanius tells us in his life), who, because of his comely form and holy life, called him so, but by his father at his birth or circumcision. It was a commendable practice of the Jews to give their children the names of such as had formerly excelled in virtue (a custom imitated by Christians, who used to call such children as were born to them upon or near the festivals of any of the apostles or others by their names, which custom Philip Pareus, in the life of his father, David Pareus, tells us was observed in his country, and that for that reason his father had that name given him), or for the remembrance of some event, or for the foretelling of something to come to pass. But, however, usually they gave them names of a good signification; which, though we are not bound to imitate (as some do even unto superstition), but have a liberty to impose such names as are in use in our country, though haply we know not the signification of them, yet it hath been also the piety of Christian churches to provide that no unfitting names be given in baptism; among others, we have a good Constitution of John Pecham, sometimes archbishop of Canterbury. *Attendant Sacerdotes ne lasciva nomina, quæ scilicet mox prolata sonent in lasciviam, imponi permittant parvulis baptizatis, sexus præcipuè fœminini, et si contrarium fiat, per confirmantes episcopos corrigatur.* Let the priests see that they suffer no wanton names, which sound lasciviously, to be given unto infants in their baptism, especially to the female sex; and if there be, let the bishop change them at their confirmation. *Lyndw. provinc.* lib. iii. *De Bapt. cap. Circ. Sacramentum.* See also the gloss there. But this only by the way.

Who the father of Malachi was we find not; and yet that his father was not a prophet is not to be concluded, for that rule of latter Hebrews, that such prophets whose fathers are named were the sons of prophets, and otherwise not, is found to be uncertain by Burgensis in *Hos.* i. and by Francis Ribera *prælud.* 4 *in Expos. proph.* and condemned also by John Drusius, *Lect. in Hos.* i. 1.

The place also of his birth is as uncertain, save that Epiphanius, and out of him Ribera, *prælud.* 5, tells us it was Sopha, a town of Zebulun, a place not at all mentioned or observed by Eusebius or St Jerome, in Bonfrerius his *Onomasticon*, nor by Mr John More in his exact map of the land.

For the time of his prophesying see the following commentary, with which I sit down in this point, unwilling to endeavour to reconcile chronologers about the precise year. John Alsted, *in Thesauro Chronol. Titulo*, 13, places him, An. M. 3537. Our Isaacson in that diligent and industrious work of his, places him an hundred years sooner, not far from which time the Hebrews in their *Seder Olam Zuta*, or briefer chronicle, translated by Genebrard, do pitch, setting his death, An. M. 3404; but the *Sepher hakkabala* (writ by R. Abraham Davidis, as Genebrard calls him, who also translated some part of it; or R. Abraham Bardior, as Buxtorfius names him in *Bibliotheca Rabbinica litera P.*) yet nearer to the year of Issaacson, and our commentary, about A. M. 3450. Let such as have leisure, and think it worth the time, satisfy themselves farther. To me it is plain by the matter that he handles, that he prophesied after the temple was built (for he reproves their profaning of the altar) and a little before the coming of Ezra, for he inveighed against their marrying with strangers, which Ezra by his authority did remedy. Epiphanius tells us he was born after the captivity, and died young. As if he had been an angel, only came and told his errand, and presently returned. But thus much for the inscription, by away of preface. We are next to consider the prophesy itself, from verse 2 to the end of the book.

II. The prophecy itself, which contains divers contestations with them all, both priests and people, for many things that were amiss among them. But being concise and pathetical, as most of the prophets are, and abounding in affection, he intermingleth with his contestations and reproofs sometimes persuasions, sometimes threatenings, sometimes promises; yet (saving the judgment of others who have handled this book) I resolve the whole prophecy into eight contestations.

*First*, For their ingratitude and contempt of God's worship, from chap. i. ver. 2, to chap. ii. ver. 10.

*Secondly*, For their unequal and unrighteous dealing with each other, chap. ii. ver. 10.

*Thirdly*, For their marrying with strangers and infidels, chap. ii. ver. 11, 12.

*Fourthly*, For their polygamy, chap. ii. ver. 13, 14, 15, 16.

*Fifthly*, For their blasphemy against God, and his providence, from chap. ii, ver. 17, to chap. iii. ver. 7.

*Sixthly*, For their impenitence, chap. iii. ver. 7.

*Seventhly*, For their sacrilege, chap. iii., ver. 8-12.

*Eighthly*, Again for their blasphemy and atheism, from chap. iii. ver. 13 to the end of the book.

I. THE FIRST CONTESTATION. He contests with the priests and the people, for their ingratitude and contempt of God's worship, from chap. i. ver. 2, to chap. ii. ver. 10. In this,

1. He expostulates with them, chap. i. ver. 2 to 9.
2. He threatens them, ver. 9 to the end of chap. ii.
3. He amplifies the former expostulations and threatenings, chap. ii. ver. 1 to 10.

1. He expostulates with them,

(1.) For their ingratitude, ver. 2 to 6.

(2.) For their contempt and profaning of God's worship, ver. 6, 7, 8.

(1.) He expostulates with them for their ingratitude, ver. 2 unto ver. 6. They did not account of, nor so much as acknowledge, God's love. The prophet therefore presents the Lord reasoning with them, and convincing them of it. We have,

[1.] The proposition of God's love.

[2.] The proof of it.

[1.] The proposition of God's love: ver. 2, 'I have loved you, saith the Lord.' Tremellius reads it in the present, 'I love you.' Not only as Jerome, 'I have loved you,' that is, the Jews. While they loved me and kept my covenant, they had testimonies of my love; but according to the force of the Hebrew, who by one tense signify all, I have loved you, and do love you; else they might object, What is that to us that thou hast loved our fathers, and hatest us?

[2.] The proof of it. Where,

*First*, The occasion of it. Their questioning with God.

*Secondly*, God's answer to it.

*First*, The occasion is their questioning, and unthankful denial of his love. *Yet ye say.* Geneva, *And yet ye say;* Vulgate, *And ye have said;* Tremellius and Piscator, *And ye say;* Vatablus, *And ye will say:* so he, because *Vau* turns the preter into the future; Chaldee, *And if ye shall say.* This variety yet alters not the sense. *Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us?* or *dost thou love us?* So Tremellius, What testimony is there of thy love? It is the objection of the people, rising partly from their oscitancy and forgetfulness, partly from the observation and sense of their former and present miseries.

*Secondly*, God's answer to their objection, by way of proof of his love.

First, That he chose them before Esau and his posterity. He chose their family and the father of it, and preferred him before Esau, though equal to him in other respects, being his brother, his twin brother, yea, his elder brother.

*Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau*, ver. 3. The sense is, I have loved and chosen Jacob, and you his posterity, before Esau and the Idumeans; which was true, first, when both the fathers of these families were in the womb, before any desert or actual fault. The history is, Gen. xxv. 23, 'I have hated,' *i. e.* less loved Esau,* Jacob being before and above him. So Leah was said to be hated, Rachel being preferred before her, Gen. xxix. 31. And in that sense Christ will have us hate father and mother; that is, he will be preferred before them, Luke xiv. 20 with Mat. x. 37; see also Deut. xxi. 15, Prov. xiii. 24, and xix. 6, 7, Mat. vi. 24. And besides, Esau is to be taken, at least in this place, not so much personally as originally, for some think Esau himself did not fall away to idolatry, though the Edomites afterwards did (*vide Apparatus ad orig. Eccl.* 1, *Appar. sec.* 24); yet he was a profane person, and, if he remained impenitent, was reprobated (so Pareus *ad Rom.* 9, *Dub.* 4). But however it were with him, here the context sheweth the Lord speaketh of the posterities, and their whole posterities, the whole border or nation; but election is of certain persons, not of any whole nation. Secondly, *when* the Jews were preferred before the Idumeans. They had the law of God and his ordinances, the temple and God's worship, the ministry of the prophets, yea, and the rule and dominion over Edom. Thirdly, and chiefly at that present, when Malachi prophesied, when the Jews were returned into their country, and the Edomites left in captivity. Unto this temporal condition of theirs the Geneva note applies all, and so the meaning of the place seems to be unto me, though the apostle citing this place rises higher, to treat of predestinations, Rom. ix. 11–13. And what use he makes of this place to that purpose is more fit there to inquire, to the commentators on which I do therefore refer the reader.

Secondly, that he now shewed a different dealing toward them: that whereas they were now again in their own land (which is only intimated here), yet Edom was left waste and uninhabited. And they might the rather consider this as a testimony of God's love to them that this was done to Edom for their sake, for so we find it in Obadiah, ver. 10, 11, that their unmercifulness in Jerusalem's destruction is paid home unto them. This desolation of Edom is set out to be, 1, extreme, ver. 3; 2, unrecoverable, ver. 4; 3, notorious, ver. 4, 5.

1. Extreme: 'I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness.' It is a circumlocution to express that πανολεθρία, that total ruin of Edom.

*His mountains, i. e.* the mountains of Seir, so named, not of Esau, but of Seir the father of the Horites, as Bonfrerius argues against both Eusebius and St Jerome, in his *Onomasticon.* A stony and hilly country, being part of Arabia Petrea, like unto Tirolis or Helvetia among the Alps, or as our country of Wales. So it is described to be by all the prophets that mention it, and prophesied against it, as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Obadiah. A large tract it is, though a barren, larger than Christianus Adrichomius hath described it

* The anomaly in the word אתו, see in Amama.—*Gram.* lib. i. c. 10, Num. 21.

to be, as Jac. Bonfrerius proves against him (*Annot.* 5, *in Chorogr. Tabulam.*), because Elath and Eziongaber, which are seated on the Red Sea, were within it, as appears, Deut. ii. 8, 1 Kings ix. 26, 2 Chron. viii. 17. To which also agrees Mr More's map.

*And his heritage.* The land which the posterity of Esau possessed *hæreditario jure*, for as God gave the Canaanites to the Jews, so he gave the Horims, the old inhabitants of that part, into the hand of the Edomites.

*Waste.* Ruinous and desolate. שממה, the word here, and שממה and משמה, all signify the same thing, and when an utter desolation is to be expressed, two of them are sometimes put together, as Ezek. xxxv. 3, 'O mount Seir, I will make thee (*Shemama Umeshamma*) wasteness and desolation;' or, as our English reads it, 'most desolate.' And ver. 7 of the same chapter, two more are together, 'I will make mount Seir (*Shimama Ushemama*) desolation and desolation,' or, 'wasteness and wasteness;' or, as ours, 'most desolate.' And how that is we see, ver. 15, 'Thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumæa, even all of it.' That is, no place fit for men to dwell in, but, as it is in the next words;

*For the dragons in the wilderness.* The French and Deodate, 'exposed to dragons.' Another phrase to express an utter desolation usual in the prophets, Lam. v. 18, Isa. xiii. 19–22. Which description of the ruining of Babylon will give light to this phrase, and of which place Benjamin, *in itinerario*, observed and relates, that that old Babylon is utterly overthrown, in which Nebuchadnezzar's stately ruins are yet to be seen, but inaccessible for men, because of the divers and harmful kinds of serpents and dragons lurking there. And they are here called 'the dragons of the wilderness,' either because where they abound they will turn a place into a wilderness, by driving men from their habitations, or because they do usually breed and live in such uncouth and forlorn places, or (which we may observe) because it was the wilderness of this country of Edom, where the Israelites were stung with fiery serpents; this country, a great part of it, being wilderness and abounding naturally with serpents, they should swarm and possess the rest of the land, which, how great a judgment it is, we have notably and excellently set forth by Lucan in his *Pharsalia*, lib. 9, describing Cato's dangerous passage through the Lybian desert. But for this utter wasteness of Edom, see more in the prophets Jer. xlix. 9, 13, Ezek. xxv. 13, Obad. 3, 4, 5.

2. Unrecoverable. 'Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down,' ver. 4. Their endeavours shall be vain and to no purpose to repair their ruins, for I will cross their designs; and though they obtain liberty of those in whose land they are held to return and restore things, yet they shall not be able. A like passage we have, Isa. ix. 9–11; see the place.

*Whereas Edom saith.* So ours and Montanus; 'Though Edom say,' so Geneva; 'If Edom shall say,' so Pagninus, Piscator, and the Italian, the particle כי will bear all these, and the sense differs not.

*Edom.* A name of Esau, which his father or somebody else gave him upon his greedy desire, or mocking his intemperance, which made him double the word through earnestness: Gen. xxv. 30, 'Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee (*min-haadom haadom*), with that red, that red pottage: therefore his name was called Edom.' But it is here taken for the country, or rather the inhabitants of the country, Edomites.

[*N.B.*—The Rabbins (cited by Galatinus, *de Arcan. lib.* iv. c. 28) usually by Edom understand Rome, and so render divers places, as Lam. iv. 21, 'O daughter of Edom (the Targum reads it רומי רשיעא, *Roma impia*, wicked Rome) the cup also shall pass through unto thee.' They say also that Julius Cæsar and the succeeding emperors were originally of Edom. St Jerome on Isa. xxi. 11, where Edom is called *Duma*, gives us the reason of the Jewish error, their mistaking ד for ר, and ו for ו, and so read *Roma* for *Duma*. But their error hath more malice in it than mere mistaking, as will appear by their applying of all places mentioning Edom, against the Christians, under the name of Romans. See Ribera in Obad., ver. 1.]

*We are impoverished.* So ours; the Geneva, Chaldee, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, 'We are destroyed;' so Vulgate, *Russasnu, ad extremam inopiam reducti*, brought to extreme want. רוש is, *possessione destitutus, exterminatus fuit*, put out of all; or, as we use to say, thrust out of house and home, their towns of trading and fields yielding increase being destroyed.

*But.* *Vau* is sometimes adversative, though usually copulative, as Montanus and Piscator do render it here, *and.*

*We will return and build.* Piscator puts it into one word, *reædificabimus*, 'we will rebuild,' as if שוב here in construction with another verb were used adverbially for *Rursus, again.* The LXX, ἐπιστρέψωμεν καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσωμεν. We will turn again and build again.

*The desolate places.* Vulgate, Those things which were destroyed, *Hharabot, Solitudes, Wastes;* so the word is used, Isa. lxi. 4. A metonymy, of the form; wastes, that is, waste places; solitudes, solitary or desolate places.

*Thus saith the Lord of hosts.* The Lord God of hosts. So Piscator. But *Elohe, God*, is not in the text. About the name *Jehovah* there hath been much ado about the writing, pronouncing, and use of it. It would too much enlarge these notes here to undertake the examination. I refer the reader to Menasseh ben Israel his *Conciliator*, Quæst. iii. in Exod.; Drusius, *Heb. Quæst. lib.* 1, *qu.* 56, *lib.* 2, *qu.* 68, 69; *lib.* 3, *qu.* 6, *a.b.*, but especially *lib. de Tetrag;* Mr Brough-

ton, *consent of Scrip.*, p. 1, and *ad An. mundi*, 2741; Beza, *Annotat. Majores, in Apoc. i.* 4; Sixtin. Amama his *Dissertatio de Keri*, p. 26, and *De recta lectione, lib.* 5, *p.* 57, but especially his *Dissertatio de Nom. Tetragram.* in his *Antibarb. Biblicus, at page* 473, &c.; Mr Selden, *De dis Syris*, 1, *Syntagm.* 2 chap. i. p. 110, 111, 117; the lexicons of Buxtorfius and Schindler in the word הוה.

The French Bibles constantly render Jehovah *eternal*,* somewhat answering the signification of the word *Jehovah*; but Mr Deodate, in his Italian, doth still express it according to their usual speaking, *Signore*, which is the same with the Spanish *Senor*, and *Don*, and the English *Lord*.

*The Lord of hosts.* Many interpreters retain the Hebrew word in their translation, *Dominus Zebaoth*; so doth the LXX most usually, κύριος σαββαώθ, (and the New Testament from them, as Rom. ix. 29). But in this place, and so throughout the prophecy, (which may be noted here once for all; see Conrad. Kircheri *Concord. Gr.*) they render it, κύριος παντοκράτωρ, the Lord Omnipotent. Only the fragment of Aquila, τῶν στρατευμάτων, and so ours, 'Lord of hosts.' *Zaba* is an army or an host set in order; the plural, *Zebaoth*, Gen. ii. 1. And the Lord is thus called, having the command, first, of the angels; secondly, of the stars; thirdly, of all creatures on the earth. This is his name, as it is Amos v. 27, 'Saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts.'

*They shall build, but I will destroy.* You are repaired, but not they; their labour is vain. Here the LXX again use ἀνοικοδομήσουσι, they shall rebuild.

*I will destroy.* The LXX, καταστρέψω, *subvert.* I will throw down what they build; 1 Kings xix. 10, 'They have thrown down thine altars.' The same word that is here. We have an English word from the French *harasser*, of the same sound with the Hebrew, and much of the same sense, to *harass*. Thus their desolation is set out to be extreme and unrecoverable, and in the last place, notorious.

3. Notorious. It is now, and shall be taken notice of to after times, that Edom your enemy is under my indignation. Notorious, 1, to the world, to all; 2, to you the Jews.

*First*, To the world. 'And they shall call them,' or, 'They shall be called.' An impersonal locution, as we say; that is, all that pass shall hiss and point at them, and shall call them.

*The border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.* The calamity of Edom shall go for a proverb. It shall lose its old name among men, and carry a name of infamy, and a mark of divine vengeance.

*The border of wickedness.* A poor cursed land laid waste for sin.

*The border.* That is, the land of wickedness, or, the wicked land. French, 'the country of wickedness,' and so the Italian *contrada d' empietà*, 'the street, precinct, or country of wickedness,' the border, or term, or limit, being put for the land itself; or it is so expressed, because men shall only come to the border or marches, and standing there and entering no farther on, shall, as it were, point and say, Ah wicked, ah wicked place.

And the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. LXX, παρατέτακται, the people against whom the Lord fights; the people whom he abhorreth and despiseth. For the original signifies to abhor and contemn, as well as to have indignation against.

*For ever.* עולם, which usually is translated *ever*, signifies a long time, or a time whose duration is hid from us; for the root of it is *alam*, to hide. Yet, according to our use and sense of the word, it is true that Edom, though it were a people again after this time (as appears by Josephus, *Antiq.* lib. xiii. cap. 16, 17, and *Belli Judaici*, lib. vi. cap. 7), yet the Lord had indignation against it for ever; for, first, their captivity was never revoked by any degree. Some relics only stayed in some few unobservable places of Idumea, and those few, and other colonies that came in (because the land was open) increased somewhat, and were called Idumeans, though they were *Mista natio*. Secondly, and these also, such as they were, were subdued shortly by Hircanus, the Jewish high priest, and received (or as Ludov. Capellus *Hist. Apost.* p. 93, were forced to receive) circumcision, and were made Jews, so their estate was changed for ever. Thirdly, after the Jewish war, their very name by degrees perished, no memory of them being left in posterity.

*Secondly*, Notorious also in special to the Jews, the church, the people of God. 'And your eyes shall see,' ver. 5, (the Italian supplies *lo, it*, in a smaller character, 'shall see it'), 'and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.' French, 'above all that are upon the frontiers of Israel.' This Tremellius reads otherwise, 'which your eyes shall see from the border of Israel, and ye shall say,' &c, The Hebrew, 'from the border' or 'upon' or 'from upon.' The border, that is, the region of Israel is opposed to the border or region of wickedness. God had indignation at that, but here they shall see that God will make his name great. Through his goodness towards them, or, as John Tarnovius, he will manifest his goodness from above, from heaven, upon their border; see Ps. cxxvi. 2, 3, Joel ii. 21. The Chaldee thus, 'Let the glory of the Lord be multiplied, for he hath enlarged the borders of Israel;' to wit, the Idumeans being subdued, and made Jews' by Hircanus; or as some, the Lord will be magnified by enlarging the Jews' borders over other nations. Picsator seems to incline to this (how much God enlarged their borders, see in Ribera *comment. in Obad.* ver. 19 fully). Or as Osiander, let the Lord be praised who hath again restored and made our land to flourish; or as others, in a yet different sense, the Lord will be magnified from beyond the

* L'Eternel.

borders of Israel, through the world. Thus much of their ingratitude. In the next place,

2. He expostulates with them for their contempt and profaning of God's worship, ver. 6–8, in which we have,

1. God's accusation of them, ver. 6.
2. The debating of the accusation, ver. 6–8.

1. God's accusation of them (1) more tacit and implied, (2) more open and expressed.

(1.) First, God's accusation of them is more tacit and implied, in laying a ground of discovery of their contempt; which ground is an axiom in nature. 'A son honours his father, and a servant his master.' ver. 6. A son honours, *i.e.* loves, reverences, obeys, and if need be, sustains and relieves his father. 'He will honour,' so Montanus and Piscator, that is, *honorare solet.* Not only the divine law, but human reason and nature teaches him it, and he doth it; 'And the servant his master.' Here is an ellipsis of the verb, supplied by Piscator, *reveretur;* he fears or reverences 'his master;' the Hebrew, 'his masters or lords.' So Joseph is called, Gen. xlii. 33, 'The lords,' 'And the man (*adone haarets, domini terræ*, the lords) the lord of the country spake unto us.' A verb singular is in construction with a noun plural, and it is observed to be ordinary in this word, *honoris gratiâ*, to carry with it the dignity of the person.

(2.) Secondly, His accusation of them is more open and express.

[1.] In the application of that natural law, 'If then I be a father, where is my honour?' that is, which is due to me, you confessing me to be, and calling me father. 'And if I be a master' (*Adonim*, plural, as before. If, as Tarnovius, it have not a farther meaning to set out the mystery of the Trinity), 'where is my fear, my reverence?' So Tremellius, מוראי, *Morai*, of ירא, to fear and to reverence, and to venerate and worship. But of *jare* there are two nouns: *ijra*, which is that *timor* by which we religiously worship God, and *mora*, that fear wereby we are in awe of one that is terrible; and that is the word here.

[2.] The accusation is expressed in the direct accusation, where,

*First*, Who accuseth? It is God. 'Where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts;' see ver. 4.

*Secondly*, Who are accused? The priests. 'Unto you, O priests.' The Italian supplies, 'unto you, O priests I speak.' St Jerome, Theodoret, Remigius, Hugo, &c., think all the people are reproved for neglect of God and his service. And they are so afterwards; but here it is more specially directed to the priests, God's *primo-geniti*, his sons, peculiar to him, which heightens the accusation. *Chohen* is a minister *in politicis*, as well as *in sacris*, 2 Sam. xx. 26, 'Ira the Jairite was (*chohen*) a prince or chief ruler about David.' See Menas. ben Israel, *conciliator*, *Qu.* 29 *in Exod.* But here the whole context is clear for interpreting it *priests.*

*Thirdly*, The crime they are directly charged with, 'you that despise my name.' This is the general head under which the particulars after mentioned are comprehended. The LXX, οἱ ψαυλίζοντες τὸ ὄνομά μου, ye that esteem my mame at a low rate. The French, ye misprized my name. 'My name,' that is, *me*, *my glory*, or fame and dignity. Renowned men are called 'men of name,' Gen. vi. 4. In opposition to which, base men are called (*beli shem*) men of no name, Job. xxx. 8. Thus God accuseth them. We have next,

2. The debating of that accusation.

*First*, They traverse it. They put him to the proof. 'And ye say' (or, as the Vulgate, 'And ye have said'), 'Wherein have we despised thy name?' Do we contemn thy name? so Tremellius. The Tigurine here is rather a paraphrase than a translation. In what thing have we counted thy name vile, and is it disregarded by us?

*Secondly*, God's reply to convince them, ver. 7, 'Ye offer polluted bread upon my altar.' The Italian supplies it, 'Inasmuch as ye offer,' &c. Such as offer polluted bread upon my altar, despise my name. But you do so; therefore you despise my name.

*Ye offer.* So Pagninus also turned it, and it is agreeable to the mind of the place; though that of Montanus's correction be more to the letter, 'Ye cause to come;' or that of Tremellius, 'Ye bring,' for so the word signifies. *Maggishim* of *Nagash* to come near, or, to bring.

*Bread.* St Jerome, Remigius, Lyranus, Hugo, understand the shewbread, being not wheaten and unleavened, but, contrary to the law, of barley, branny, and leavened; and therefore called polluted, which was brought and set on the table of shewbread, for that they also mean by the altar. But bread here seems to be the same with the sacrifices mentioned ver. 8, so that here is a synecdoche, *bread*, that is, the meat of the sacrifices, or polluted sacrifice. For לחם signifies, as well as bread, all sorts of food. Therefore afterwards, ver. 12, it is called meat. So also in the other original doth ἄρτος signify, Mat. vi. 11, Luke xiv. i. This is also observed by Stephen Menochius in his short notes. Deodate here renders it food in his Italian, and his margin refers to Lev. iii. 11, where he saith, the sacrifices were called the food of the Lord.

*Polluted bread*, or unclean. The sacrifices are so called, either being not according to the law, Lev. chaps. i.–iii., and chap. xxii. 20, &c., Deut. xv. 21, or being polluted through the impiety of the offerers; or that they brought *Idolothytes* for sacrifices, which in the New Testament, Acts xv. 20, are callled ἀλισγήματα τῶν εἰδώλων, 'pollutions of idols,' and that is the word of the LXX here, ἄρτους ἠλισγημένους. And it seems Daniel was afraid lest if he had eaten of the king's portion he might eat of the meat prepared in the feasts of the idols whom the king worshipped and sacrificed unto, and so be polluted, Dan. i. 8.

*Upon my altar.* The altar of burnt-offerings.

*Thirdly*, The people's answer again, 'Wherein have we polluted thee?' The LXX, ἐν τίνι ἠλισγήσαμεν σε. But whatsoever it is that we bring or offer, yet wherein have we polluted thee?

*Fourthly*, God's farther reply for the proving of the assumption of the last syllogism which they denied, and to shew them how near they touched himself in their profaneness: 'In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible;' or as the Geneva, 'not to be regarded.' As if it were no matter what they brought and laid upon it.

*The table of the Lord.* So he calls the altar, because the sacrifice is, as it were, a feast to the Lord, and for the priests. And so the altar is expressly called, Ezek. xli. 22, 'The altar was three cubits, and he said unto me, This is (השלחן) the table that is before the Lord.' And, no doubt, the Lord's table may also be called an altar, in that harmless sense in which the fathers used it, before transubstantiation was hatched or thought of. John Alsted, *Paratitla Theol. in verbo, propositionis mensa*, observes that the Greeks use both names, but not for the same table. They have two tables, one upon which the bread and wine stands before the consecration, which they call πρόθεσιν, and the table; and another to which the elements are carried from thence, where they are also consecrated, and that they call ἅγιον βῆμα, the holy seat, and θυσιαστήριον, the altar. But the fruitless logomachy in this point which hath been already, hath been but too much. The table is put for the altar (a metaphor), being like a table, the Lord being feasted at his altar. The metaphor is clear: Isa. lxv. 11, 'Ye are they that prepare a table for that troop,' *i. e.* that make an altar and sacrifice to good fortune, as Mr Selden interprets it in his learned book, *De dis Syris. Syntag.* 1, cap. i. p. 4. Such is that of the apostle when he calleth the βωμὸς the *ara* (which we have not a fit English word for, but we usually though unfitly call) the altar of devils, 'the table of devils,' 1 Cor. x. 21.

*Ye say, The table is contemptible.* The LXX here have the same word again, τράπεζα κυρίου ἠλισγημένη ἐστι. But it is in the Hebrew, as ours have rendered it, 'contemptible.' Either, 1, they saw the sacrificing to be despised, slighted through such long disuse, by reason of the seventy years' captivity they had not recovered the fervour of former time to be so frequently before the Lord; or, 2, they looked scornfully on the mean building and ornaments of the temple, for it did not answer the glory of the former house; so Tarnovius; or, 3, because the Jews were newly returned, and were yet but poor, and could not bring such rich oblations, therefore the priests grew cold and careless in attending on the altar; or, 4, because they saw what was brought consumed with fire, they thought anything good enough for the fire, good enough to be burnt. The truth is, the low and cheap opinion of God's worship hath ever made a greater waste upon religion than an over-high; and there is less danger, though there be danger, in superstition than in profaneness. Hence it was, that the piety of ancient Christian times was so much in their reverent demeanour in God's house, though otherwise their devotion had much feculency and dross admixed. Among the many canons to this purpose of other churches, and our own, everywhere obvious, I cannot but here insert that very devout one which fell into my observation at the time of the collecting of these notes, which Sir Henry Spelman hath imparted to the world out of Bennet College manuscript, *non debere ad ecclesiam*, &c.: 'We ordain, that men come not to the church for any other cause than to praise God, and to do him service; but contendings, tumults,* and vain talkings, and all other like actions, let them by no means be suffered in that holy place. For there where God's name is called upon, and sacrifice offered unto God, and where no doubt the angels are frequent, it is dangerous to do or say any such thing as agrees not to that holy place. For if the Lord cast those out of the temple which bought or sold such victims as were to be offered to himself, how much more offended will he cast out them who pollute that place set apart for divine worship, with vain leasings, mirths, and such like toys?' The place is, *inter capitula incertæ editionis*, chap. x.; *in concil. pam. brit.*, p. 591, where you shall find it both after the Latin and the Saxon copy. A devout canon of that ancient but well nigh most corrupt age since Christ, if it were made, as Sir Henry Spelman seems to guess by his placing it, about A.D. 1050. And indeed all ages of the church have been tender in this point but ours. But what a diseased mind is it to find fault with the serving of God with comeliness and honour, and that it will not be endured that we should be splendid at our own tables and sordid at God's? As Bellarmine † also complained, even in that overdoating and superstitious church, of some prelates, that they would provide rich wines for their own tables, and cared not what tap-lash was served at God's; an instance that we may easilier complain of than have remedied, at least in our country parish churches.

This profaneness is argued to be, 1, against God's law; 2, against the rule of common honesty and comeliness, ver. 8.

First, Against God's law. 'And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice (or, to sacrifice), is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?' Thus also the LXX. and the Chaldee, and Tremellius read it by an interrogation; but Vatablus, with the Tigurine on which he noted, as Cornelius à Lapide, *proem. in min. proph.* p. 6, affirms, which I have not seen, but only those notes of his, which being taken from his mouth by Bertinus, who succeeded him in his professorship at Paris, were set out, together with the Vulgar and Pagnin's version, by Robert Stephens, A.D. 1556,

* Pleadings and matters of arbitrament.

† Bellarmin. in *Gemitu Columbæ.*

(which I note here only by the way, and once for all); and Pagninus and Montanus, the French, the English of Geneva, and John Tarnovius, who here and usually follows Luther, they read it affirmatively, 'When ye offer the blind, &c., it is not evil.' The authorised English before our last, and Piscator supply it, 'When ye offer the blind, ye say, It is not evil.' That is, it is well enough, though it be blind or lame. It is not evil in your opinion, who, rather than you would lose any gain, say, *Melius est il quam nil*, it is Lucas Osiander's rhyme upon this place, not mine; better that which is ill and bad than nothing at all. But the sense is much clearer in the interrogative, 'Is it not evil?' That is, it is evil; and so it is the first argument against their profaneness. See the particulars explicated in the commentary. The second is, that it is,

Secondly, Against the rule of common honesty and comeliness. 'Offer it now unto thy governor,' or, as the Geneva, 'to thy prince,' 'will he be pleased with it?' or, as the Geneva, will he be content with thee, 'or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.' That is, he will be displeased with thee, he will not accept it at thy hand, much less will I, saith the Lord.

*Thy governor.* The LXX and the Vulgate, 'thy captain;' the Geneva, 'thy prince.' Those that ruled in the time of the second temple were not called מלכים, *kings*, but פחות, *captains* or *governors*, because they were then under the power of other nations, and were not kings or supreme princes, but had prefecture granted unto them. Such an one Nehemiah was, Neh. v. 14, and Zerubbabel and others, who, as Deodate observes, had their provision of beasts and other food brought in for their use, and the maintenance of their house by the people, to which this present text seems to allude. Yet such a one, much less a king, will not be well pleased with a sorry worthless present, or a neglective service.

*Accept thy person.* Vulgate and Pagninus, 'accept thy countenance,' or 'face;' Hebrew, 'thy faces;' but it is to be translated in the singular, for *pane*, the singular, is out of use; and it is here taken for the person, and so it is otherwhere, as 2 Sam. xvii. 11, 'Go to battle in thine own person;' or, I counsel thee that thy face or presence go.

*Accept thy face*, or, will he lift up thy face? For הישא here, is of נשא, as was said upon the first verse; but when *nasa* is used *de facie alterius*, it signifies to honour one, or to do somewhat for his sake. Will he honour thee, as great ones use to do such as bring them presents that they like? will he gratify thee with his favour? will he be benevolent toward thee? He will not.

Lucas Osiander here takes this occasion gravely to apply this passage against their sin, who destinate unto God's ministry such as are of dull wit, and of defective or blemished bodies, as if any were good enough and fit enough for God. The papacy, which, as Cardinal Allen, *Apolog.* chap. vi., saith, is discreetly managed, is wise in this point, doing as the master of the eunuchs under the king of Babylon, who chose out of the Israelites such children as were without blemish, well-favoured, wise, and skilful, and had ability in them, that they might be taught in the art and tongue of the Chaldeans, Dan. i. 3–5. We have this place notably applied and enlarged by Dr Raynolds in his preface to the Conference. It were to be wished, that that order which the ingenious Spaniard Huarte, in his *Examen. de ingeniis*, in the dedication to King Philip speaketh of, were taken, that some men of great wisdom were deputed to discover each one's propension in his youth, and so accordingly to dispose of them; that they be not set to the study of divinity that are fit only for carpenters or tailors; for, as he well observes, they are such as have not a wit for divinity that destroy Christian religion. See his 10th chapter. But of this by the way. And so much of God's expostulating with them in the next.

*Secondly*, He threatens judgments against them, ver. 9 to the end of the first chapter; judgments, 1, privative, ver. 9 to 14; positive, ver. 14.

1. Privative judgments. (1.) The rejecting of their prayers, ver. 9; (2.) the rejecting of their sacrifices, ver. 10; (3.) the removal of his worship, ver. 11–13.

(1.) First, He threatens the rejecting of their prayers: ver. 9, 'And now I pray, beseech God (or the face of God) that he will be gracious unto us; this hath been by your means (or from your hand). Will he regard your person? saith the Lord of hosts.' Many do take this as an wholesome counsel to the priests, or a serious advice that they would repent, and fly to God's grace to avert his wrath, and to pray unto him that he would be reconciled. So St Jerome, and they that usually follow him, Theodoret, Rupertus, Lyranus, Haymo, Menochius, as also Jo. Piscator, and the Geneva note. But I incline to Montanus, Junius, Deodate, and the author of this following commentary,* that it is an irony: Try now, I pray, beseech God, see if you can prevail. You have reason to try what you can do, for you are they that have provoked God, but you shall not be accepted.

*Beseech.* חלו, Weary God with your prayers. It comes of חלה, to be grieved, to be sick, to be weak; and when it is joined with *Panim*, as it is here, *Hhallu ná Pené-el*, it is to weary one with prayer, to deprecate. The Geneva is, 'Pray before God,' which our commentary follows, and gives this sense: Pray before him in the place of his worship. But the Hebrew is as our margin, 'Beseech the face of God;' the face of your God, so the LXX.

*That he will be gracious unto us.* That he may have mercy upon us; so the Geneva and Italian. It is the same phrase which is used in that form of prayer or blessing which was ordered for the priests, Numb. vi.

* Stock on Malachi, to which he seems to have originally intended to *prefix* his Exercitation.—ED.

25, and haply this place alludes to that. (See Maimonides, alleged by Ainsworth *ad loc.*

*This hath been by your means*, or, 'from your hand.' So Hebrew, Chaldee, LXX, the Tigurine, and Tremellius. 'This evil hath been done by your means;' so our old authorised English doth express it, and it seems to answer to the interpretation of St Jerome and his followers: This hath not been so much your fathers' sin as yours; not so much the people's as yours, the priests'; therefore you that have angered the Lord, do you pray.

*Will he regard your persons?* We had the same phrase in the former verse; see it there. Only the Vulgate, taking this whole verse for a counsel, not an irony, reads, 'If by any means he may receive you.' Others, If by any means he may take his face; *i. e.* his anger from you. And the word will bear that too, for *nasa* is *auferre* as well as *suscipere*. Theodoret yet otherwise, 'Do you think God will receive you to favour without repentance and prayer?' Others, 'Will he regard you more than the rest? will he be partial?' No; you shall smart also.

(2.) Secondly, He threatens the rejecting of their sacrifices: ver. 10, 'Who is there even among you that would shut the doors (for nought)? neither do ye kindle (fire) on my altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.' Winkleman thinks he passes here to a new reproof, to condemn their *ἀισχροκέρδεια*, seeking dishonest gain even *in minutissimis*. And so it seems the composer of the short notes in our old large English Bibles thought, whose margin hath only this, 'Against all those that follow religion for lucre's sake.' St Cyril and St Jerome seem to take it as a provocation of them to serve God better. You do nothing in my service, but you get by it; why then do you neglect it? If nothing else, the reward might make you diligent. But most take it as a rejecting of their sacrifices, though they go not the same way, because they differ in the reading of the text: 'Who is there among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle mine altar in vain?' So the Chaldee, LXX, Theodoret, Vatablus, 'I would somebody would shut the doors, that they might not offer these polluted sacrifices to no purpose.' 'Who is there that would shut the doors, and kindle not fire on my altar in vain?' So the Geneva, and their note is, God desires they would rather shut the doors, than receive and burn such offerings. The author of the following commentary follows that, in which I must depart from him; because we in our last (and the best English) translation, read the words otherwise, as above. We supply the word חנם (for nought), out of the following sentence, as Piscator also doth, 'Who is there that would shut the doors for nought?' Unto which I will offer a double sense: 1. There are none of you that would or did serve me without recompence; and therefore being so engaged to serve me, and yet withal so unthankful, I have no pleasure in you or your sacrifices. Or, 2. Who is there even among you, any of you (for I will even make yourselves the judges), that would so far gratify the people, as to open the doors of the temple to pray for them; or to kindle the altar to sacrifice, to make atonement for them, and yet not be respected by them, but do all this for nought, they bringing you the refuse tithes, poor, mean, and corrupt offerings, as good as if they brought none at all? But so ye deal with me, and despise my name, therefore I have no pleasure in you, nor will accept your offering.

*Who would shut the doors, i.e.* of the temple. The word is דלתים, the double doors. The difference beween דלת, *Janua*, and פתח, *ostium*; see in Gen. xix. 6, 'Lot went out at the door (*ad ostium, id est, aperturam*, the doorplace) and shut the door (*Januam*, the opening door) after him.' The Greek expresseth the difference more clearly: Lot went out, *πρὸς τὸ πρόθυρον*, to the porch (or outward door), and shut *τὴν θύραν*, the door (the inner door) after him. But to return to the text in hand; these two-leaved doors of the temple were daily to be opened by the priests of the family of Korah, where they waited, as it were, to watch their watches there. See 1 Chron. xvi. 38, xxvi. 1, 2 Chron. xxxv. 15, and Henr. Molterus *in Psalmum* lxxxiv. ver. 11.

*Neither do ye kindle fire on my altar.* 'Illustrate my altar,' so Tremellius; or as Montanus hath it, 'cause my altar to shine,' which is also to the sense of our translation; because things kindled or set on fire do shine. According to that of Virgil: *Collucent ignes;* and

> Mænia respiciens, quæ jam infelicis Elizæ
> Collucent flammis.

The LXX render it as we do, *ἀνάψετε*, 'ye kindle.' The Chaldee paraphrase expresseth the meaning too, 'Ye offer upon my altar.'

*I have no pleasure in you.* The Italian, 'I do not esteem you a jot.'

*I will not accept an offering*, &c. The word here is, *Minhha*, of which see the next verse, in which,

(3.) Thirdly, He threatens the removal of his worship, ver. 11–13; where we consider,

[1.] The translation, in the word of illation, *for*. Tremellius reads it *but*, and Piscator therefore would have it to be כי for כיאם. But we need not so supply the original, in which we have a clear context, in which God passeth from the former threatening to this, as alleging this as a reason of the former: I will not accept their offering, for I have other people that more reverence me.

[2.] The threatening itself, set down by a comparison of dissimilitude between the Jews and the Gentiles; where,

*First*, The proposition, shewing the Gentiles' care of his worship, ver. 11.

*Secondly*, The reddition, shewing the Jews' neglect and profaning of it, ver. 12, 13.

*First*, The proposition shewing the Gentiles' care of God's worship, and respect unto it: ver. 11, 'From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name (shall be) great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense (shall be) offered unto mine name, and a pure offering; for my name (shall be) great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.' I will abolish your sacrifices, impure, and bounded in one narrow land; my name and my worship shall not be confined in Judea, but the whole world shall be my temple, and all nations shall worship with pure offerings, for my name shall and will be magnified among them everywhere.

*From the rising of the sun, to the going down;* that is, everywhere, from east to west. And what if these western parts of the world be particularly prophesied of to enjoy the worship of God after the Jews which were in the east; or what if these islands of ours that lie in the sea, into which the sun is said to go down, which is an expression of the old Greek poets (see John Scapula in *Them.* Δῦω), and the prophet here useth such a word in the other original, when the west is called, according to the vulgar conceit, the sunset, or the sun's going down, or going in, *introitus solis*, מבוא of בוא, to lie down, or go in.

*My name great.* The Geneva supplies *is*, we supply it *shall be* great. God's name, what it is, we saw ver. 6.

*Shall be great.* LXX, δεδόξασται, 'glorified.'

*Among the Gentiles* (in the end of the verse they are called the heathen, but the same word, גוים). The Jews themselves are also ordinarily called *Gojim*: Isa. ix. 3, 'Thou hast multiplied the nation (*Hagoi*). The Targum there, 'the people of the house of Israel:' Ezek. ii. 3, 'I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation' (*Gojim*, nations), called so in the plural, because though they were but one people, they were many tribes, or divided into many factions. But when the word is opposed to the Jews (as here), it denotes other people that are not of the seed of Abraham, who in the New Testament are called ἔθνη, as Mat. x. 5, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles,' εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν: Rom. xv. 11, 'Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles,' πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, This word the LXX use here, ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι, though this word also be used for the Jews even in the New Testament: Luke vii. 5, ἀγαπᾶ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν, 'He loveth our nation;' that is, the Jews. But the Jews used the word ordinarily to signify another people, and a people of another worship, and to this day they use to call a Christian *Goi*, a Gentile; as we now also do use the words heathen, Gentiles, pagans, for such people as are without Christ, or are without the covenant; as in the apostles' time they ordinarily called all such as were not of the church (or which used to be called Gentiles) ἕλληνες, Greeks, because the greatest part of the east country spake Greek, and that people were the principal among the Gentiles which were known unto the Jews. But the Syriac of the New Testament, instead of *Grecians*, usually turns it *Aramœans* (see Tremell. Marg. ad Act. xx. 21, xxi. 28, Rom. ii. 9); and the difference of the Grecian and Grecist in the language of the New Testament, see in Goodwin, *Mos. et Aar.* lib. i. cap. 3.

*And in every place incense offered.* So also the LXX, Arabic, Syriac, Pagninus, the Tigurine, Arias Montanus; for *Kitter* and *Ktora*, and *Ktoreth*, and the word that is here, *Muktar*, do all signify incense or perfume. It is spoken in the language of the Levitical law (which is ordinary with the prophets), to set out the spiritual worship of God under the time of the gospel. Yea, under the law itself, prayer was resembled by the psalmist unto incense, Ps. cxli. 2; and the same resemblance is used in the New Testament, Rev. v. 8.

*Offered;* and so the LXX, Pagninus, Tigurine; 'put,' so the Syriac; the Arabic of Antioch, 'made;' but the other Arabic reads it 'brought:' all agreeable both to the signification of the word *muggash* of *nagash*, to draw near, or to come near (that which is offered it draws near unto God), and to the use of incensing. Only the Vulgar Latin translates it 'sacrificed,' but improperly; yet the popish interpreters make use of that translation for their purpose in the interpreting of the next words, of the sacrifice of the mass, though without reason, as we shall see.

*And a pure offering.* This, I say, the pontificians interpret of the mass, for, say they, the word here, מנחה, *Mincha*, signifies specially that offering of fine flour, Lev. ii. 1, which was, say they, a type of the eucharist. But, 1, *mincha* doth not always signify a sacrifice, as we shall see afterwards; and, 2, the words of the prophet cannot, κατὰ τὸ ῥητὸν, literally be understood of the mass, for the popish priests do not offer fine flour, and oil, and frankincense, which go all to the making of this *mincha*, of which see the place, Lev. ii. 1, 2, and Maimonides, *Tr. de Sacrif.*, cap. 13, sec. 5. And for farther answer to this interpretation see the following commentary fully, together with Chemnit. *Examen.* part 2ª, lib. vi. *de Missa*, arg. 8.

There are divers other interpretations. The root of this Hebrew word is *manahh*, an Arabic verb signifying to give, and *minhha* is any solemn gift or present: to man, as Gen. xxxii. 13, 'Jacob took (*mincha*) a present for Esau;' so Gen. xliii. 11, 1 Sam. x. 27, and 2 Sam. viii. 6, 'The Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts;' Heb. *mincha*, Gr. Φέροντες ξένια. But especially it is a present or gift to God, which, when it is of cattle, it is called *korban*, and when of things inanimate, as flour, cakes, wafers, &c., it is called *mincha;* so Gen. iv. 3, 'Cain brought of the fruit of the ground (*mincha*) an offering to the Lord.' But most strictly it signified those particular kinds of meat offerings mentioned Lev. ii. There were five kinds of them in that chapter, and among them that of fine flour, which was to be offered every morning and evening, Exod. xxix. 38–41. This *Mincha* was primarily a figure of Christ's oblation, who gave

himself for 'an offering to God for us,' Eph. v. 2; so Heb. x. 5, &c. The apostle openeth the 40th Psalm, a type of Christ, but not of the eucharist. Secondly, it figured the persons of Christians, who through Christ are sanctified to be pure oblations to God; prophesied of, Isa. lxvi. 20, 'The Gentiles shall be brought for an offering (*mincha*) to the Lord.' To which place, or rather to this of the prophet Malachi, the apostle seems to allude, Rom. xv. 16, where he calls the conversion of the Gentiles through the gospel 'an oblation,' or 'offering,' or 'sacrificing of the Gentiles unto God,' in which respect also he calls his preaching a sacrifice, as Erasmus reads it also, *sacrificans evangelium*, though the phrase be obscure. Hugo's interpretation here was of the proselytes, who should be an offering to the Lord to the temple, *ex omni loco*, 'from every place.' But it is not so in the text, but 'in every place.' And this sense agrees better with the conversion of us the Gentiles. Thirdly, it figured the fruits of grace and good works, particularly prayer. The Jewish interpreters say this pure offering is meant of the prayers of the holy Jews everywhere dispersed. So the Chaldee paraphrase, 'I will receive your prayers, and it shall be like a pure offering before me.' But the place speaks of the Gentiles; therefore it is that Tertullian occasionally, and Vatablus and Calvin *ad loc.*, understand it of Christians their performing of worship to God in the duties of holiness and love. Hence duties of love are called sacrifices, Heb. xiii. 16, Philip. iv. 18, but chiefly the duties of holiness, praises of and prayers unto God, when everywhere there is a 'lifting up of pure hands to the Lord,' 1 Tim. ii. 8. And it is observable that the time of the *mincha*, which was daily morning and evening, was the time of set prayer among the Jews: Dan. ix. 21, 'While I was speaking in prayer, Gabriel touched me, about the time of the evening oblation' (*mincha*). This is that which the Rabbins call *tephilla mincha*, the prayer of the evening sacrifice, which was about three of the clock in the afternoon, called in Scripture, according to the Jews' reckoning of the time, 'the ninth hour,' which is said to be, Acts iii. 1, ὥρα τῆς προσευχῆς, 'the hour of prayer.'

Secondly, the other part of the comparison, or reddition, shews, on the contrary, the Jews' neglect and profaning of that worship which the Gentiles would so reverently entertain, vers. 12, 13. This is set down,

I. Generally, ver. 12, *But ye have profaned it.* But ye priests and others, that have reason to entertain and reverence my name and worship, ye have polluted it. LXX, βεβηλοῦτε αὐτὸ, ye have dishonoured it. And so Pagninus, the Geneva, and Deodate's margin.

II. Particularly, 1, in their thoughts; 2, in their words; and 3, in their deeds.

First, in their thoughts, or base conceit; for it is not so likely that they uttered it in words. 'In that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.' They had a base conceit and profane of God's altar and the sacrifices.

*The table;* that is, the altar. See before, ver. 7.

*And the fruit thereof, even his meat.* Our old authorised English hath it 'the fruit,' and in the margin, 'or the word.' It is true that נוב, *fructus, fruit*, is by a metaphor transferred to speech, which is the fruit of the tongue, as Isa. lvii. 19, 'I create (נוב) the fruit of the lip.' Where the Targum is *mamlal*, and the LXX λόγον, and the sense seems to be so, I create speech, or the word of the lips. But here it is in its proper signification, the fruit; the Septuagint, τὰ ἐπιτιθέμενα, which the Vulgate follows, 'That which is put upon it, with the fire that doth consume it.' So the Vulgate, mistaking the original word, as if it were אוכלו, *comedens illum;* but the word is אכלו, *cibus ejus*, his meat; the Chaldee, 'The table of the Lord is despised, and the gifts thereof.' The Tigurine, 'The provision thereof is vile,' because, as Vatablus notes, the fat and entrails that were offered were vile. St Jerome otherwise, 'the fruit,' that is, the fire, 'and the meat of the fire,' that is, the victim or sacrifice. I rather take it as our translation hath expressed it, for two nouns put absolutely, or, as we say, *per appositionem*, both the altar and the fruit, even the meat upon it, were despised by them. 'The revenue, the income of it,' so the Italian in the text; or 'the fruit,' so in the margin.

Secondly, in their words: ver. 13, 'Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it.' Besides what conceit ye have cherished, ye have also uttered enough to discover your hypocrisy and profaneness.

*Behold what a weariness is it;* or, as the Geneva, 'It is a weariness;' the Vulgate, 'Behold, this out of our labour.' Somewhat like to that of the LXX, 'Behold these out of our affliction.' We are returned poor, and this is as much as our labour or poverty can allow. But it is not מתלאה, *de labore, of labour;* but as Pagninus and Vatablus observe, and as it is in our best copies, מתלאה, *matlaa*, either there is a double *heemantic* (as they call it), or it is two words, as Rabbi Abraham would have it read, מה תלאה, and so also Sixt. Amama *ad loc.* in his *Anomal. Special. Quis Labor!* Oh how I am weary! How I pant in bringing it, it is so fat and heavy! or, how are we tired and spent in God's service! This I take to be the sense. There are other interpretations, as that of Winkleman, 'the beast is not faulty, but only it is weary;' the priests so hypocritically excusing themselves, in taking any offering that came to hand; or as some others, who also make these the words of the priest, some one of them taking up the shoulder or the breast of some carrion sheep, saying, See what we have for our labour, what a weariness is it to serve so fruitlessly. But I rest in the sense before.

Thirdly, in their deeds, expressed,

1. More darkly.
2. More clearly.

First, More darkly. 'And ye have snuffed at it;' or, 'Whereas ye might have blown it away.' Your very carriage hath expressed your hypocrisy, and pride, and contempt.

והפחתם אותו. Huntly, the Scottish Jesuit, contends from Galatinus that for אותו was formerly read אותי. For the vindication of the uncorrupted reading of which place, see Solom. Glassius, *Philol. Sacr.*, lib. i. tr. i. p. 50.

*Ye have snuffed at it.* 'Behold what a labour, and ye throw it down.' So Pagninus. As if they would take breath, pretending to be weary in the carrying of it, being so fat and weighty. Ye say, Oh how weary! because the beast is fat and heavy, whereas ye might have blown it away, being so thin and light. So Tremellius expresseth it, and John Tarnovius; or, It is worthy to be blown away; so Jerome, Remigius, Lyranus, you pant as if it were weighty, but I blow it away with scorn. So also Jerome and Theodoret. The Septuagint, *in editione Romana*, read it, ἐξεφύσησα, 'I have blown it away.' But Cornelius à Lapide tells us that in the edition of the LXX *in Bibliis Regiis*, which I had not, 'Ye have puffed or blown.' John Winkleman gives a singular sense, that the priests, by a kind of writhing of their mouths and drawing in their breath, would, though in a scornful way, extenuate and lessen their fault in receiving corrupt offerings. 'Why, the beast is not faulty, but only weary; is this such a matter? As if forsooth,' &c. I rather will propound this sense; you blow and pant as if tired, and think all too wearisome, and snuff and shew dislike at it, snuffing or puffing with the breath being a sign of dislike and contempt, and pride. So the soldier in Plautus: *Quojus tu legionis difflavisti. Quasi ventus folia aut peniculum tectorium.* So God shews his contempt of his enemies: Ps. x. 5, 'As for all his enemies, he puffeth at them;' so Prov. xxix. 8, 'Scornful men bring a city into a snare,' or, 'set a city on fire,' that is, with their breath; or *diflant civitatem*, as Drusius renders it (*Hebraic Quæst.*, lib. iii. qu. 22).

Secondly, More expressly. 'And ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this at your hand? saith the Lord.' Ye cared not what you brought or offered. Thus ye brought, *mincha* (observe that that word is used here too, as well as verse 11, where the papists so much contend for it) an offering indeed, such as it is, but such as I cannot nor will accept.

*That which was torn.* That which you got by rapine and oppression, so the Vulgate. Ye say, ye afford it out of your labour, but ye lie; it is what you steal, and of that too not of the best. So that here are three sins discovered together, rapine, irreligion, and lying, and thus St Jerome, Remigius, and Lyranus understand it. 'That which was rent and torn;' so Tremellius; and therefore Calvin understood it, that they bought sheep that were worried; but they brought the beasts always alive, therefore the former exposition is received by most, that which you snatched away by oppression. But how doth this agree with the description of the offering in the next words, lame and sick? I therefore incline to Calvin's, and it might be worried and torn, and yet alive. Deodate, in his Italian, gives both senses, and leaves it to the reader's choice. Thus much of the threatening of judgments privative. We have in the next,

II. A positive judgment threatened, ver. 14, where,

First, The judgment threatened, a curse. 'But cursed be the deceiver;' cursed with curses temporal, spiritual, and eternal. LXX, ἐπικατάρατος, *forespoken* or *execrated.* The ordinary word of the LXX, Deut. xxvii. 15, &c.; and of the New Testament, as Gal. iii. 13.

Secondly, The sin; 1, generally; 2, in particular.

First, Generally set down, 'The deceiver,' deceitful against the faith of religion and against ordinary justice. Tremellius calls him *machinator*, he that can devise ways of deceit covertly; the crafty deceiver. The LXX, ὃς ἦν δυνατὸς, 'Who was able,' taking the word in the text, *nochel*, to come of *jachal*, *potuit*, whereas it is of *nachal*, to *deal perfidiously*.

Secondly, In particular. 'Which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.' That hath better, for if he had not ability, God would not require at his hands, but he should be more blameless, and yet thinks the worst good enough for God. He must have a flock, and a male in it, that is, a sacrifice fit, perfect, and without blemish according to the law; or else God doth not require or so strictly expect from him.

*And voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing*; that is, that voweth a perfect or sound thing, for they were by the law to vow, Lev. xxii. 23, males and perfect, but comes short of his vow and sacrificeth a corrupt, not answerable either to the purpose of his vow, or to the law. There was no man that would vow a corrupt thing, though through fraud he sacrificed or offered such a one. Therefore the Greeks have expressed this sense, 'Cursed be the deceiver that hath a male, and his vow being upon him, sacrificeth a corrupt thing.' And accordingly the Vulgar Latin, 'That, making a vow, sacrificeth a weak thing.'

*A corrupt thing.* Vulgate, a weak; Pagninus, a spotted or blemished; the Tigurine, a faulty. The Hebrew word *maschat* is weakened, gelded, maimed, corrupt.

*To the Lord.* Hebrew, *Adonai.* This is the first time in this prophet that God is directly named by any other name than Jehovah. *Adon* is a lord, who as a foundation or a column sustains his people; and it is applied to God, who is the Lord of the whole earth, who is called Adon: Exod. xxiii. 17, 'All thy males shall appear before (Adon) the Lord God.' But of this appellative there is formed a proper name

or epithet of God, *Adonai*, with *Cametz*, having the same points with Jehovah.

Thirdly, The reason both why the deceiver is cursed, and to assure him he shall be so. 'For I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.' The Italian, 'For as much as I am a great King.' The sense is, It will not stand with my glory to suffer my people to profane and despise that name which the heathen magnify and fear.

*Dreadful.* Arias and the Geneva, 'terrible;' the Vulgate, 'horrible;' Tremellius, 'reverend; the Chaldee, 'potent.' Only the LXX render it ἐπιφανὲς, 'illustrious,' as if the word here נורא were of ראה, to see, but it comes of ירא, to be afraid. And this verse seems to refer to the sixth, 'If I be a master, where is my fear?' The very heathen acknowledge me to be so by their dread and fear of my name. Thus having expostulated with them, and threatened them for their ingratitude and contempt, in the next place, in the former part of the next chapter,

III. He amplifies the former expostulation and threatenings, chap. ii. ver. 1 to the 10th, where,

First, To whom he chiefly applies his speech: ver. 1, 'And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.' The French, 'is addressed unto you;' and so Deodate's Italian also supplies it. He here returns his speech to the priests, whose avarice and profaneness had been the fountain of much other evil and profaneness among the people. 'Cursed be the deceiver, whoever he be: but to you, O priests, it is principally to be applied. My name is dreadful even among the heathen; if it be profaned by you, that are near me in attendance and service, the curse is chiefly against you.'

*And now;* or, as Tremellius, 'Now therefore.' Their objection is prevented; all that hath been said touches the people, not us. Yes,

*This commandment is for you;* or, as Montanus, 'to you.' This commandment, this increpation, this intimation of my mind, is for you. Or, this commandment is for you; that is, of you I principally required and expected to be honoured at my altar, in my sacrifices.

Secondly, The matter of the speech, mixed of contestations and threatenings, or a conditional threatening of many judgments unless they repented. We will consider, ver. 2,

1. The conditions of exemption from his judgments: 'If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts.' Here are three conditions of exemption: to hear God; to lay his commandment or their duty to heart; to give glory to God's name. The sum of them is repentance.

*Lay to heart.* The phrase is usual and frequent. The Geneva, 'Consider it in your heart;' Chaldee paraphrase, 'Unless ye put my fear upon your heart.'

*Lay it.* What? My precepts, so Vatablus; your duty, so Tremellius; my glory, so others.

2. The things that are threatened,

Set down more largely, vers. 2–8.

Repeated again with more brevity, ver. 9.

1. Set down more largely.

(1.) In general, ver. 2.

(2.) In particular, vers. 3–8.

(1.) In general, 'I will even send a curse upon you.' The Vulgate, 'I will even send want upon you.' And they translate it so, because that curse was usual to the Jews; and now being so lately returned, and as yet not very warm in their nests, would be the greater curse, and because it would suit with their covetousness. To say a little more for the Vulgar Latin in the rendering of this place; it is a saying of the ancient Hebrews, that all benedictions are amplifications, and all curses are diminutions. Which Dan. Heinsius hath observed upon ἐυχαριστήσαντοος, in the text of John vi. 23, in his *Aristarchus Sacer, parte secund*, cap. viii., where the reader shall find more to this purpose, to whom I refer him. But מארה, of *Arar* or *Ar*, to speak against, or execrate. The LXX, Chaldee, Vatablus, Pagninus, and both our English do render 'a curse,' leaving the explicit meaning to the expositor. 'I will execrate you,' or 'pronounce a curse against you.' This is amplified further three ways.

[1.] By an explication. 'And will curse your blessing.' It is the same word again, וארותי, *vearothi*, 'I will execrate,' or 'imprecate,' as the Targum expresseth it by another word, *vealút*, 'And I will lay an oath' upon you, as if it were a curse laid on with an oath. So it is Zech. v. 3, 'This is (*haala*, 'the oath,' where it is in our last English) the curse which is gone forth.' I will lay an oath upon your blessings. You shall not prosper. It may be expounded either, first, I will deprive you of what you have and enjoy, or are like to enjoy, so that you shall reap sparingly, 2 Cor. ix. 6, so Cyril, Remigius, Vatablus; or, secondly, I will curse and blast what you bless, as your beasts, houses, fields; so the Chaldee, 'I will curse your benediction and will execrate it.' And this St Jerome also follows.

[2.] By the certainty of it, being even begun already. 'Yea, I have cursed them already.' Tremellius, 'I have cursed them every one.' The Chaldee and Vulgate make it but a repetition of the same thing, 'I will curse your blessings, and I will curse or execrate them.' But Vatablus and Pagninus reads it as we do.

[3.] By the cause briefly and anticipately inserted, 'Because ye do not lay it to heart,' of which see before in the condition.

(2.) The things that are threatened are set down in particular; vers. 3–9.

[1.] Famine, ver. 3.

[2.] Shame, ver. 3.

[3.] God's breaking covenant with them, vers. 4–8.

[1.] Famine: ver. 3, 'Behold I will corrupt (or

reprove) your seed,' *Goer Lachem eth hazzerah.* The uncertain interpretation of גער and זרע have caused variety of exposition. גער is to 'reprove or reprehend with sharp words and much noise,' especially when it is in construction with ב, as Gen. xxxvii. 10. ויגער בו, 'His father rebuked him.' But when it is in construction with an accusative, it is to curse, or corrupt, or destroy, as Ps. ix. 5, *gaarta gojim*, 'Thou hast rebuked the heathen;' or, as the meaning there is, 'Thou hast destroyed them,' as the next words do plainly shew. And so that word is taken here. The other word זרע, if it be written זרע, it is seed; if it be written זרע, it is an arm of a man. So it seems the LXX read it. And hence the ancient fragment of Aquila, 'I will reprove you with mine arm,' as a soldier, or in resemblance to whom, an orator casts or stretches forth his arm when he is vehement (as Cicero speaks, *Brachium procerius projectum est quasi quoddam telum orationis*). St Jerome, and Lyranus, and Menochius, much otherwise, 'I will throw away the right arm or shoulder of the offering,' which was the priest's due, Lev. vii. 32; that is, I will deprive you of your maintenance and strength. Montanus and De Castro take it as a threatening of rejection both of priest and sacrifice; I will cast away both the arm by which ye offer, and the seed (the *mincha*), the offering also. Most of these and the Vulgate follow the LXX, who, mistaking Noer for Goer by reason of the likeness of נ and ג, read it ἀφορίζω. And for such as read the other word, *zera*, seed, some understand it of their seed, that is, their posterity, that God threatens to destroy them and their issue. Some understand it of the seed cast into the ground,—and that sense I have given,—that they should sow but not reap plentifully, which is a threatening of famine. The next is,

[2.] Secondly, Shame and ignominy. 'And I will spread (or scatter) dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts, and one shall take you away with it,' or, 'it shall take you away to it.' So our last, together with the marginal reading. The French, 'And ye shall bear it;' Osiander, 'And it shall stick unto you.' The Vulgar Latin, and the Geneva English, and the commentary following, 'which used it,' are here dark. The Chaldee first offers us light to this place, I will reveal the confusion or shame of your sins to your own faces. The LXX (though mistaking כרש for פרש, and reading it ἔνυστρον, the belly, in which the excrement or dung lies, which belly was part of the priest's due) have given us also another hint of interpreting. Because ye despise me, and offer ye care not what, ye shall also be despised; the people shall throw you the belly, which is your due, in the time of your solemn feasts, but with the dung or excrements in it, so that, in the throwing of it, the dung shall fly in your faces, that being so sprinkled ye shall be laughed at by all; and you shall be so like dung, your faces being fouled with it, that he that comes to cleanse the place shall offer as if he would throw you out with it, or take you also upon his dung fork; or as Deodate, you shall be vile as dung, which is removed away into a place remote from the temple. So this is the threatening of shame and confusion to them, even in their solemn, their rejoicing feasts. *Hhaggechen* of *hhagag.* Or else, *hhag* is taken here synecdochically for the sacrifice itself offered in the feast, as it is sometimes taken, Exod. xxiii. 28, Amos v. 21, Isa. xxix. 1. The dung of the sacrifices; see John Tarnovius, *Exercit. Biblic.*, p. 127, par. 4, edit. 2a. Howsoever the same sense stands good. The next is,

[3.] Thirdly, God's breaking covenant with them, which is implied, ver. 4, 'And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.' Wherein we have three points: 1, I intended it should have stood; 2, but it doth not or shall not stand; 3, and that because ye are unanswerable to it. Upon this he takes occasion to remember them of the covenant with Aaron or Phinehas and the tribe of Levi, and now their falling from it, and therefore God's justice in forsaking them. So we have here,

*First*, The parts of the covenant, ver. 5.

*Secondly*, The answering the conditions of the covenant by the former priests, vers. 6, 7.

*Thirdly*, The degenerating of these priests, ver. 8.

*First*, The parts of the covenant between God and Levi, ver. 5.

First, On God's part, a gracious promise and performance of life and peace: 'My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave them to him.' God promised prosperity, and performed a long, prosperous, and happy life to some of them; as to Aaron, who lived 103 years, and to Phinehas (mentioned by Vatablus in his notes), who lived 300 years as it is thought, and as some chronologers do observe (yea, it is the conceit of Peter Damian, from some Jewish triflers, that he lives still, taking him for Elias), and to Joshua or Jesus, the son of Josedech, who (according to Helvicus) lived 110 years in the office of the high priesthood. To these and others was expressly fulfilled a covenant (החיים, *vitarum*, as it is in the original) of lives, that is, of long life, and of peace, and would have been ready to have performed it to these to whom Malachi prophesies, had they kept covenant with him.

Secondly, On Levi's part, for fear and humility: 'For the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.' Fear and humility were the two conditions for which God did this for them. Their fear of God, which was to be seen in Aaron, Phinehas, Onias, and other good priests. And their being troubled, and affrighted, and grieved, when they saw God's name to be contemned and abused, see Exod. xxxii. 26, Num. xxv. 7, 8.

The Vulgar Latin and the Geneva read it in another sense, 'And I gave him fear, and he feared me;' but not so agreeable to the original. Tremellius

renders the last words, 'because of my name.' It (that is, the tribe of Levi) was broken. And Junius his note is, that Levi was deprived of life and peace, because he sanctified not God's name. But the whole context is against that reading and interpretation. נחת (which is an anomaly, and according to the rule should be נחח) is the præter tense in niphal of חתת, which is, *to be dejected, broken, cast down*, &c., and so metaphorically it is used to signify, *to be amazed, affrighted, trembling, humbled*. Wherefore we decline that of Junius, and rest in the sense offered by our last translation. See further in John Tarnovius *ad locum*. Thus of the parts or the conditions of covenant. Next see we,

*Secondly*, The answering of the conditions of the covenant by the former priests, vers. 6, 7; which is,

First, Particularly set down, ver. 6.

Secondly, Amplified by a theorem, ver. 7.

First, Particularly set down, ver. 6, as it had been more generally in the former verse.

(First) That they were studious in the law and skilful in it: 'The law of truth was in his mouth.' Aaron and others taught truly.

*The law of truth.* אמת for אמנת (*vide plura de hoc nomine apud Valent. Schindlerum in Pentagl. in verbo* אמן), or 'the law of righteousness,' for this is opposed to unrighteousness or iniquity in the next member, 'iniquity not found in his lips.' The law, the mysteries of righteousness, is called, 'the truth,' Dan. viii. 12.

(Secondly) That they seduced none to error: 'And iniquity was not found in his lips;' Chaldee, 'no falseness.' No lie, error, fraud, hypocrisy, or flattery.

(Thirdly) That they lived conscionably in peace and equity: 'He walked with me in peace and equity.' Aaron kept God's precepts, lived honestly and peaceably and justly; and so did others of them.

*He walked with me.* To *walk*, is a known phrase in Scripture, used to signify a man's manner of living, as Ps. i. 1, and Ps. cxix. 1. But 'to walk with God,' or 'before God,' signifies, to lead a life unblameable, as Gen. v. 24, and xvii. 1; only 1 Sam ii. 30, it signifies barely 'to minister;' and so the Targum in that place renders it, using שמשון, 'should minister,' for יתהלכו, 'should walk.' 'The Lord said, that the house of thy father should walk before me for ever;' that is, minister unto me, or before me. But usually, and here, it notes the holiness and integrity of the service, as well as the service itself.

(Fourthly) That they brought others to God by their example and teaching, 'and did turn away many from iniquity;' that is, they did cause many to return. To which agrees the Septuagint, πολλοὺς ἐπέστρεψεν, 'He converted many from iniquity,' מעון, from their crookedness or crooked ways into which they had turned aside. It comes of עגה, *to be crooked or contort*, which by a metaphor is used to signify sin. So we call evil manners *curvos mores*, crooked manners. We translate it *iniquity*; the LXX, *unrighteousness*, ἀπὸ ἀδικίας. Thus the former priests did; and this is,

Secondly, Amplified by a theorem, that so it should be with all other priests: ver. 7, 'For the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.' 'The priest's lips should preserve knowledge.' The Vulgar Latin and our old authorised English Bible read, 'shall preserve.' And the pontificians omit not the advantage of the translation, in the question of the church's (but in the final resolution of the point), of the pope's infallibility in interpreting of the Scripture. To this question, besides others that have dealt in it, see *Hist. of Council of Trent; Engl. lib.* 2, *page* 158; *Episcop. Dunelm. Antidotum de merito, &c.; Epist. dedic., pages* 9, 10, 11; and fully to the point and to this place *Relig. of Protest.* in the preface, pages 7, 8, and part 1, chap. ii. sect. 1, 84, &c. 93, &c. 110, &c. See also *Dr Jackson, the triplicity of Romish blasphemy, sect.* 3, *chap.* 1, *parag.* 6, *&c.* And the present most learned bishop of Salisbury, *Determin. quæst.* 5, which reference I make, that I may not enlarge these shorter notes with the controversy. Only observe for the clearing of the present text, what Amama and Casaubon, and before them Drusius and others, acquainted with the Hebrew speaking, have observed, that among the Hebrews the future is often made to denote not so much what shall be, as what ought to be, as 2 Sam. xiii. 12, 'No such thing shall be;' that is, 'ought to be done in Israel.' Like that, 'There shall be no poor among you;' that is, there ought to be none, but ye should provide for them. So it is here: the priests' lips *shall*, that is, *ought* to preserve knowledge Which also is observed by Francis Ribera the Jesuit.

*Knowledge*; that is, knowledge of the law, as appears by the next member. The priest's duty is to be both furnished, and to bring out of his treasure things new and old, to be much in preaching to the people. Accordingly it is thought that some of the Christian fathers preached every day. However, it was provided for by canons, that they should preach frequently. Such a canon we have in the *Excerptions of Egbert, Archbishop of York, anno* 750. *Ut omnibus festis et diebus dominicis, unusquisque sacerdos evangelium Christi prædicet populo*, that every priest preach the gospel of Christ unto the people upon all holy days and the Lord's days; and especially for the Lord's day, in the canons under King Edgar, *anno* 967. *Docemus etiam, ut sacerdotes in qualibet die solis populo prædicent.* We require also that the priests preach unto the people every Sunday. Since the Reformation, men have been frequent in this duty, many bishops being also exemplary to their clergy. The publishers of the lives of Dr Jewell, sometimes lord bishop of Sarum, and of the late reverend and godly bishop of Bath and Wells, have made it one of the heads of their commendation, their assiduity in

preaching. But especially the care of the ancients was much for catechising. Of St Mark's catechising at Alexandria, and then Clement's, and after him Origen's, the histories are known. We have Cyril of Jerusalem's catechisms, and the *Catecheses Mystagogicæ*, which are printed with them; which, if they were not his, are yet of some ancient author. We have a tract of St Augustine's, *de Catechizandis rudibus*.; and another, *de Symbolo ad Catechumenos*, and beside the practice of the fathers, many councils ordaining it. But the care of no church hath been greater than that of ours, even in ancient times. In a council held at Clyffe, *anno* 747, it was provided that every priest should instruct his people in the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the sacraments in the English tongue. Canon 10: (see Sir H. Spelman's margin *ad locum*) this canon is inserted afterwards by Egbert into his *Excerp.* 6. See also the ecclesiastical laws of Canutus, cap. 22, *apud Spelman*, page 549, an excellent and serious exhortation to this purpose, but too long here to transcribe; and the Canon 23 of Ælfric, page 578. Yea it seems by the *capitula incertæ editionis* (which by Sir H. Spelman's placing of them should be about *anno* 1050), cap. 28, to have been the custom of our bishops here, when they met in their synods with their clergy, to examine them in the manner of their teaching, and how they profited their people. After these times catechising was not much heard of till after Luther's preaching, when perceiving that the Protestant churches won much ground by this kind of diligence, the practice was renewed by a decree of the Council of Trent in the Romish church. For our part, what ground we got by catechising, we are most likely to keep and hold it by the same course, and to lose it all again by the neglect, which was the observation of our judicious King James, that the cause why so many fell to popery and other errors was their ungroundedness in points of catechism. Upon such a reason as this it was that an elder article of a former synod was renewed in the synod at Dort, that all pastors should catechise in the afternoon on the Lord's day (*Acta Synodi, sess.* 14 and 15). The very same with his majesty's injunctions to the clergy of England, and which is provided for by canon, and inquired into by the Articles of Visitations, but on all hands too too much neglected; which hath given me occasion to transgress my purpose in these shorter notes, and to enlarge this discourse, which yet I cannot leave till I have noted that observable passage of the present reverend bishop of Exeter, in his preface to his *Old Religion*, that there is nothing whereof he repents so much, as that he had not bestowed more hours in public catechising; and that, in regard hereof, he could quarrel his very sermons. And his sermons are excellent ones, as all know that know them. To two of them, namely, his *Columba Noæ* preached to the English clergy in their convocation here in England; and to another upon Eccles. vii. 16, preached to the divines at Dort, at their 16th session, I refer the reader, where he shall find an eloquent and zealous exhortation in this matter. But of this point enough. I return to the text.

*And they should seek the law at his mouth.* Here the Vulgate reads as before, as if it were a promise of their infallibility. But it is only an intimation of the people's duty. And the reason follows.

*For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.* מלאך. The LXX and the Vulgate read, the angel. The priest is called so, 1, because he ministers to God as the angels do before him, who stand before him and praise him; but 2, specially and here, because he is God's messenger to men from God, and from men to God. Accordingly, the Tigurine here, 'He is God's legate or ambassador.' And that learned knight in his *Glossary* or *Archæology* hath observed to us out of Ekkehard, that the name hath been given even to the ambassadors of kings, *cedamus angelo imperii*. We have seen how the former priests carried themselves. The next is,

*Thirdly*, The degeneration of these priests from the practice of their fathers, in regard of their covenant, verse 8, in three particulars.

First, That they were gone from their piety: 'But ye are departed out of the way,' or, 'out of *that* way,' as the article is in the Hebrew; that is, either out of my way, or out of that way in which your fathers walked. You have diverted or turned out, or as the LXX, ἐξεκλίνατε, declined. Your course is opposite to that of your fathers. They caused many to return to me; you are returned and gone from me. But this opposition is more direct in the next member.

Secondly, That they caused many to fall, by their example partly, and partly by their corrupt glosses: 'Ye have caused many to stumble at the law,' or 'to fall in the law.' The Geneva reads it 'by the law;' the Vulgate, 'ye have scandalised many;' Montanus, 'ye were a stumbling-block, or an offence;' others, 'ye have caused that men should stumble at the law,' or 'go against the law,' and so fall into sin, and consequently into calamities. So Piscator, LXX, ἠσθενήσατε, 'ye have weakened many in the law;' ye have offended, snared, caused to strike, or dash or stumble, for all these כשל will bear.

Thirdly, That they had in sum broken the covenant: 'Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.' Geneva, 'Ye have broken;' Vulgate, 'Ye have made void.' The LXX read as we do, διεφθείρατε, 'corrupted.'

*The covenant of Levi;* that is, the covenant made with Levi: a metonymy of the efficient. Thus we have seen the threatenings more largely.

Those threatenings are repeated more briefly again, together with the justness of them, shewed also in the repetition of the causes, verse 9, where we have,

1. The judgments: 'Therefore have I also made you contemptible, and base before all the people.'

The Geneva, 'to be despised and vile;' to be abject and humble, not in affection, but condition.

2. The causes. According as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

*According.* כפי אשר for כאשר; for in this place פי is not *os*, the mouth, as Pagninus and Tremellius, &c., render it, *secundum os*, &c.; but an expletive particle, which useth to be added to the servile letters כ and ל, to make them distinct words, as כפי is here and elsewhere; as Num. vi. 21, Job xxxiii. 6, xxx. 18; and לפי, Exod. xvi. 18, Gen. xlvii. 12; and then they signify, as not only our translators in all those places and here, but the LXX also have expressed it by ἀνθ' ὧν, *propterea quòd*, because that, or according as.

*Ye have not kept my ways*, or 'watched my ways,' or been (as it is in the text, שמרים) watchful or watching to keep my way; for so the word is, Isa. lxii. 6.

*But have been partial in the law*, or *lifted up the face against the law*, or *accepted faces in the law.* The first of these is the text reading of our English Bibles, the two latter are in the margin. To the last of these agree the LXX, Vulgate, and Pagninus, and Deodate's Italian, 'Ye have regard to the quality of the person in the law; to the second, Montanus. Most agree in the sense: You priests, that should judge according to the law, you accept persons, you respect the rich, you deal partially in the law in expounding of it, making it pinch the poor and favour the rich. 'You flatter the rich;' so Vatablus. You accept the rich man's sacrifice, and have an evasion for it in some gloss; but ye reject the poor's, and are precise in the letter. To this purpose Theodoret, the Syriac, and both the Arabics (which I find in Corn. à Lapide *ad loc.*, who also *in proœm. ad Proph. Min.* p. 5, tells us that the double Arabic version, one of Alexandria, the other of Antioch, are at Rome, both in the Vatican and in the library of Cardinal Medices, translated into Latin by Sergius Risius, archbishop of Damascus). Ye accepted or took the law in the face of it, ye look but to the shell and skin of the law, and are hypocritical in it, wresting the law to serve men. So the pharisees dealt with Christ. The law allowed circumcision on the Sabbath, that they approved; Christ did but heal a poor diseased man on the Sabbath, and that in him they condemned, as if it were against the law. Therefore Christ bids them not to judge κατ' ὄψιν—our translation is, 'according to appearance,' I understand it thus—according to the face, with respect of persons, but to judge righteous judgment, John vii. 24. And I am confirmed by the learned Heinsius, whom I consulted after the collecting of these notes, in his *Aristarchus Sacer.*, pt. ii. cap. viii., where he paralleleth this very place of our prophet with that of John.

Thus we have seen the first contestation largely, for that supply which Tremellius makes unto the text, by adding the word *saying*, so to join this to the following verse, is both needless and obscures the sense. In the next verse we proceed to a new head.

II. THE SECOND CONTESTATION.

This second contestation is only in the 10th verse, wherein he contests with them for their unequal and unrighteous dealing, arguing it to be against nature and religion.

First, Against nature. All being of one flesh—'Have we not all one Father?' God (saith Deodate), or Abraham according to others, and so he takes it—we come all of Jacob, or at least of Abraham, or at least of Adam.

Secondly, Against religion. Being all of one church—'Hath not one God created us,' or 'made us?'—we serve the same God, the Creator.

Thirdly, Another evidence against nature. We are brothers of the same stock: 'Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?'

*Why do we.* The prophet includes himself, that his reproof may be the milder; a rhetorical communicating: 'Why do we,' that is, 'Why do ye?'

*Deal treacherously.* The Geneva, 'Why do we transgress every one against his brother?' Our old English, 'Why is every one deceived of his brother?' and so Montanus; but Pagninus otherwise, 'Every one despiseth his brother.'

Fourthly, Another evidence that their dealing was against religion: 'by profaning the covenant of our fathers.' They broke or violated the covenant that their fathers and ancestors entered into, to which they should have had regard, and been answerable unto it in all equal and righteous conversation.

St Jerome and some others take this verse as a particular reproof of their injurious dealing with their wives and taking others; and that here two arguments are brought to reconcile their love, the communion of blood, and the communion of religion. And that it is the violation of the particular covenant of marriage, or the covenant against marrying of strangers which is here reproved, that they dealt treacherously against their brethren, that is, either the brethren of their wives, or their wives themselves, the females also among the Hebrews being included under the term of *brethren*. But I rest in the sense above, which is that also which Deodate in his margin prefers, though he give the other also, which is that of St Jerome, and comes in the next verse to be considered. The reader may find another interpretation in the learned Tarnovius the younger, which to me gives no satisfaction; let the reader judge. And thus much of the second contestation.

III. THE THIRD CONTESTATION.

Thirdly, He contests with them for their marrying with strangers and infidels. Vers. 11, 12 we have,

1. The sin discovered, ver. 11.
2. The sin threatened, ver. 12.

1. The sin discovered: the marrying the daughter of a strange god, ver. 11. It is discovered in many aggravations,

(1.) From the persons.

(2.) From the subject place.

(3.) From the quality of the sin.

(4.) From the effect.

(1.) First, From the persons: 'Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and Jerusalem.' He exaggerates the same with more and sharper words, for Israel was now no other than Judah. Judah, that is, the Jewish people, the people of the return from the captivity of whatsoever tribe, as Esther ii. 5. Mordecai, though of the tribe of Benjamin, is called יהודי, *Judæus*, a Jew. The word is here in the feminine gender, it being usual to compare a nation to a woman, and hence that ordinary phrase, 'the daughter of Tyre,' 'the daughter of Zion,' &c. The aggravation from the persons here is this, *Judah*, the son of praise or confession (as we find the reason of the name in the imposition, Gen. xxix. 35, of הודה, *confessus est, laudavit*), he, even Judah, the son of praise, and he in whom I am well known, Ps. lxxvi. 2, he hath done that which is unto my dishonour.

(2.) Secondly, From the subject place. 'In Israel and Jerusalem.' Of Israel, see verse 1. Jerusalem was the metropolis of Judea. It was first called Salem, where Melchisedec was called king, Gen. xiv. 18. Afterwards it was called Jebus, Judges xix. 10, being in the hands of the Jebusites (which made our Minsheiu compound it of Jebus and Salem, as if the name were Jebusalem, and for better sound the *b* changed into *r*). But when David got it out of the Jebusites' hands he called it Jerusalem, of יראו and שלום, *videbunt pacem*, 'They shall see peace.' And I the rather assent to this derivation (than to that of G. Pasor in his *Etyma Nom. Propr.*, at the end of his *Lexicon in Nov. Testament.* would derive it of יראו, and שלם, *Timete Schalemum*, Fear ye Salem, a name, as he thinks, given by the Jebusites to the place out of the confidence of their strength, which cannot be made evident, neither do his other reasons hold. See the place *in verbo*, Ἱεροσόλυμα)—I the rather, I say, assent to the former derivation, because David built to the old city of Jebus or Salem a new addition unto mount Zion, which was mount Moriah, lying in the midst betwixt Zion and Salem, the very place which Abraham long before had named *Jireh*, *will see*, as it is Gen. xxii. 14, 'He called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh, The Lord will see.' Which haply is reason why the name of this city hath a dual form (ירושלים, but ordinarily without jod, as it is here, ירושלם), though it be singular, because it was made up of two parts or two cities, the upper and lower. Concerning the situation, see I. Weemse, *Expos. of Moses's Laws*, vol. 2 lib. 1, *Exercit.* 6, 7, and Lud. Capell. *Hist Apost.* p. 146, &c. The meaning of the place, as it is an aggravation of their sin, is clear enough of itself.

(3.) Thirdly, From the quality of the sin. 'Judah hath dealt treacherously, an abomination is committed, and hath married the daughter of a strange God.' Their marrying of strange women, the worshippers of an heathen idol, was a treachery against the wives of their own tribes, and against God, and an abomination or an hateful thing in God's sight, a thing that he loathes. Concerning the question, *de disparitate cultus* (whether it be to be reckoned *inter impedimenta matrimonii*), besides what we shall find in the following commentary, I refer to Reginald *praxis Fori. lib.* 31, *cap.* 21, *Num.* 168, and other casuists, who answer negatively. So do the Geneva divines in their answer to the eight questions proposed to them, which are inserted among Zanchy's epistles *lib.* 1, *ad finem Epistolæ* 58, and Lucas Osiander *ad hunc loc.* This question divided St Augustine and St Jerome, as P. Martyr affirms, *Comment. in* 1 *Reg.* iii. 1, where he hath a very large discourse against marriage contracted by those of diverse religions, yet allows it in conclusion, so that both parties do meet in the belief of the main articles of the creed, which he saith he puts in for the mitigation of the severer sentence, which yet was the sentence of the ancients, admitting no marriage with any of another faith, as is collected by Gratian, *causa* 28, *qu.* 1, *Cave, &c.*, and, *non oportet*, &c. But of this *obiter*.

*Hath married*, בעל. The Vulgate, 'hath had;' Pagninus, 'hath had to do with;' Montanus, 'hath took to wife;' Piscator, 'hath had an husbandly dominion over;' the LXX, ἠγάπησεν, 'hath loved;' Schindler, *deamavit*, 'hath greatly beloved.' The word will bear all these and more, but ours have translated it according to the prime and most used signification of the word.

*The daughter of a strange god.* They are called, 1 Kings xi. 1, 'strange women;' as the heathen idols are called, Gen. xxxv. 2, אלהי הנכר 'strange gods.' No nation formerly but the Jews did worship the true God, so that any woman of another nation might be called, the daughter of a strange god, which I suppose was the reason of Deodate's note, 'a woman of a strange nation or religion.' The LXX here take no notice of בת, *filia*, or seem to have mistaken it for some other word, and have rendered the place ἐπετήδευσεν εἰς θεοὺς ἀλλοτρίους, 'hath been diligent towards other gods.'

(4.) Fourthly, The last aggravation of their sin is from the effect of it: 'For Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, or ought to love.' *Kodesch.* The holiness, that is, the holy and separate land of Judah, the country that God had chosen to be holy and peculiar to him, they had defiled, and their own dignity, who were a people holy unto the Lord and beloved. This interpretation is given by the commentary, which is that also of St Jerome, Remi-

gius, Hugo, &c. There are others: the Vulgate reads, 'the sanctification;' Pagninus and the Tigurine, 'the holy place;' the Chaldee paraphrase, 'they have defiled their own soul, which was sanctified to the Lord, or before him, and beloved of him; the LXX, 'the holy things.' Some understand the temple, so Osiander; some, the law; some, their religion and the worship of God; some, as Vatablus, Piscator, and many others, the holy or sanctified ordinance of marriage made by the Lord. I assent to St Jerome, as above.

2. The sin thus discovered is threatened: verse 12, 'The Lord will cut off the man that doth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.' He threatens an utter dispersion even of the whole families of such.

*The Lord will cut off.* The Lord will scatter him, so the LXX, ἐξολοθρεύσει, or cut down, or lop off his boughs. Piscator expresseth it thus, 'The Lord will cut off his children that doth thus, the children that he begets, of the daughter of a strange god.' Haply he had respect to those rabbins who interpret this phrase, 'to be cut off, to die without children,' which the reader may see in a peculiar discourse of Sixtin. Amama, *Antib. Bibl. appendice ad Genes.* xvii. 14, p. 954, &c., where there is more of this phrase. Our commentary makes it a metaphor from the use of physicians, who cut off rotten members, or of the sword or axe which cuts off the head, and so we have the word, 1 Sam. xxxi. 9, ויכרתו, 'They cut off his head.'

*The man that doth this,* יעשנה. The word is feminine, but used neutrally, and so it is by all interpreted. The LXX, in the plural, τὸν ποιοῦντα ταῦτα, he that doth such, or these things, but it is meant particularly of this sin of marrying idolaters.

*The master and the scholar,* or *him that wakeneth, and him that answereth,* ער וענה. 'The master and the servant,' so the Geneva; 'The raiser up' (or, the question-mover), and the answerer,' so our old English Bible; 'He that is the author, and he that follows him,' so the Tigurine; 'He that wakeneth,' that is, he that studiously observes strange women, that he may marry where he likes; 'and he that defends,' that is, that defends this kind of marriage; so Piscator. The French, 'As well him that begins as him that answers;' the Italian, 'Him that wakes or watches, and him that answers,' which Deodate in his margin understands of the keepers, porters, and singers of the temple (who answered in course in singing according to the order of that sacred music), who had polluted themselves with such marriages. Others express it otherwise. I incline to St Jerome, Montanus, Tarnovius, and our commentary, as I have given it above, that it is meant of a dispersion even of the whole families of such, one and other, priest and people, master and scholar, which seems to be so out of the following words, 'Out of the tabernacles (or tents) of Jacob.' And what if it were a proverbial and ordinary phrase among the Jews, to which the prophet might haply allude and make use of it, but I submit the conjecture. Only here the interpretation of the Septuagint seems to be singular, 'I will cut off him that doth these, until he be brought low out of the tents of Jacob, taking עד, *adusque, until,* for ער, and missing the sense of the other word, ענה, signifying both to *answer* and to *bring low.*

*And him that offereth an offering.* That is, I will cut him off, yea, though he be a priest, that is faulty in this kind; so the Chaldee and Cyril. Or, though he offer an offering to reconcile me to him again, being displeased with such marriages; so others. And thus much for the third contestation.

IV. THE FOURTH CONTESTATION.

He contests with them for their polygamy, ver. 13–16, where consider,

1. The reproof of the sin, ver. 13–15.
2. A dehortation from the sin, ver. 15, 16.

1. The reproof of the sin, ver. 13, 14, and part of the 15th, where,

(1.) The sin. That they took other wives of the daughters of strangers to their lawful wives. This is not expressed in so many terms, or in that term polygamy, by which divines do now ordinarily call it, but easy to be collected from the context of those three verses named before.

(2.) The aggravations of this sin.

[1.] Injurious to their lawful wives.

[2.] Hurtful to themselves.

[3.] Against the ordinance of God.

[1.] First, the first aggravation of this their sin is, that it is injurious to their lawful wives, who were thereby grieved. 'This ye have done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out.' That is, this sin you have added, that by bringing in strange wives you have vexed and grieved your lawful ones, so that you have caused them to run unto the altar, to complain and to weep there.

*This you have done again.* 'Furthermore, this you have added,' so the Tigurine. 'This you have done secondly,' so the Chaldee and Pagninus. 'This second crime' (the word is feminine, but put neutral), Montanus. Ye have not only taken strange wives, but have taken them even to your other wives to vex them. The LXX here, 'ye have done (ἃ ἐμίσουν, *quæ oderam*) such things as I hate.' It seems they had respect to שנא, to hate, and mistook it for שנית, *secondly* or *second.*

*Covering the altar of the Lord with tears.* The Geneva note is, ye cause the people to lament, because God doth not regard their sacrifices, so that they seem to sacrifice in vain, so referring this to the former contestations with the priests, an exposition singular, and

wide of the whole present context, and the matter that the prophet hath in hand. That of Lyranus also seems to miss the sense: you continuing in your sin go to the altar, and weep there to beg pardon, but in vain. That of St Jerome, Cyril, Theodoret, which our commentary follows, is more agreeable: you so vilely use your other former wives that they fly, or you cause them to fly, to the temple, and weep before the altar. See Lev. xviii. 18, and 1 Sam. i. 6, 10, which texts will give light to this. But for the phrase, to cover the altar with tears, it is either to weep plentifully or to weep over the altar; to throw themselves blubbered and swollen with tears, even embracing it as it were, which was also the use of other nations in their calamities, solemn oaths, and supplications, to lay hold on the altars. So Arsinoe, in her extreme calamity and suspicion of her brother Ptolemy's fraud and cruelties, causes him to come and lay hold on the altars in the holiest temple in Macedon, for her further assurance and safety when she received his oath, as Justin describes the ceremony, lib. 24. Thus Virgil, *Æneid*, lib. 4, brings in Hiarbas, the Lybian king, imploring Jupiter—

> Talibus orantem dictis, arasque tenentem
> Audiit Omnipotens.

And of Æneas, *Æneid*, lib. 6—

> Talibus orabat dictis, arasque tenebat.
> With such words prayed he, and the altar held.

Upon this necessity of laying hold upon the altars when they addressed themselves to the deity, Robert Stephanus, in his *Thesaurus*, alleges Varro, that the old Latin word for altars was *ansæ* (the ears or handles of a pot), and afterwards changed into *aræ*.

*The altar of the Lord.* This is an amplifying of their grief. Their injury was extreme, that they are driven to the last refuge; men repair unto the altar when all help fails. And further, at the altar they should rejoice before the Lord, as the custom was when they came up with their wives to the temple, 1 Sam. i., yet there, even there, they are caused to weep. It is called the altar of the Lord; it is his standing-place, the ordinary residence of God, where these distressed women were confident to find him and to complain themselves to him; that is, more solemnly, and for a public witness of their misery, for else God, who is everywhere, doth everywhere observe the tears of them that are oppressed.

*With tears, with weeping, and with crying out.* Several words are used for the further amplification of their grief. They wept, yea, they roared out, and made great clamour and noise, or sent out deep groans; so the word is translated, Jer. li. 52.

[2.] Secondly, the second aggravation of their sin is, that thereby they did also hurt themselves, in that they made their own offerings not to be accepted: 'Insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.' The tears and groans of your wives move God more than your sacrifices do, so that he regards them not, he will not look at them, or turn his face towards them. The adverb of denying is not here in the latter member, but it is to be repeated, ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, from the former member, and so to be supplied as serving in common to both; he regards not nor receives.

[3.] Thirdly, the third aggravation of this sin is in ver. 14, 15, that it is against the ordinance of God. Where observe,

*First*, The transition, ver. 14, or the manner of the prophet's passing from the former head of aggravation unto this. God regards not your offering. 'Yet ye say, Wherefore?' the Vulgate, 'And;' Montanus, 'But,' 'But ye say, Why not regard it?' an objection it is, proceeding from their blindness or petulancy, not willing to be convinced. But the answer is ready, because the Lord hath seen that you have gone against his ordinance, as it is in the next words.

*Secondly*, The matter which he urges against them: ver. 15, 'Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.' This was their sin, that they dealt treacherously against their wives in taking others, whereas the Lord had appointed and they had made promise to one another in marriage, and only to one another, as God had ordained in the very first institution of marriage, when he could have made many women for one man, but he made only one for one. This is the sum, but there are many particular arguments against polygamy, which we shall observe in the examination of the words in the order as they lie.

*Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and thy wife.* He alludes to the use of contracting *Deo teste*, God being called to witness, and his name being called upon in the action. And he, as it were, protested then (the word is העיד, and that is, as Montanus, of עוד, *protestatus* or *obtestatus est*), that his mind and will was that marriage should be insoluble to you two, and you two should remain solely to each other. This sense St Jerome gives, and those that usually follow him, Theodoret, Remigius, Lyranus, Hugo, but most clearly Ribera.

*The wife of thy youth;* Heb. *of thy youths.* 'Thy young wife,' so Piscator. Or thy wife whom thou didst marry when thou wert young. In whom thy first love did rejoice. נעורים is that whole age of adolescence or youth, from infancy till the 25th year.

*The wife.* The LXX, everywhere γυνή, 'the woman.' We render it here *wife*, and that rightly; for אשה, *a woman*, when a genitive follows, is written אשת, as it is here and presently after, and then it constantly signifies *a woman, a wife*, and it is so written once, Ps. lviii. 9, though not in construction.

*Against whom thou hast dealt treacherously.* The Geneva, 'transgressed;' the Chaldee, 'lied;' Montanus, 'prevaricated, dealt cunningly and falsely;' the LXX, ἐγκατέλιπες, 'leavest or forsakest,' that is, treacherously for another.

*Yet is she thy companion.* Vulgate, 'thy partner;' Pagninus, 'thy fellow;' the Tigurine, 'thy consort;' the name (as Menochius observes) by which the Italians called their wives. So Eve was made for Adam, that he might not be alone, Gen. ii. 18. The LXX, κοινωνός (here used by them in the feminine), she partakes with thee in common.

*And the wife of thy covenant.* The wife with whom thou didst covenant. אשה, as before.

*And did not he make one?* ולא־אחד עשה. Here is לא for הלא. The note of interrogation is wanting, which is usual in Scripture, 2 Sam. xiii. 26, 2 Kings v. 26, Job ii. 10. As οὐ and οὐκ for οὐχί, and μὴ for μήτι, usually also in the New Testament, Mat. vi. 26, and xvii. 24, Mark vi. 3, and xi. 17, 1 Cor. ix. 8, 9, 2 Thes. ii. 5. So also the Latins speak, as Virgil, *Eclogue*, iii.

> Non ego te vidi Damonis pessime caprum
> Excipere insidiis?

*Non* for *nonne*. But, besides, the various interpretation of this hath made the place very obscure. The Vulgate, 'Did not one thus?' Pagninus boldly inserted Abraham here, 'Did not one Abraham thus as you do?' Montanus, in his correction of Pagninus, leaves out Abraham, yet seems to understand it in the same manner; so doth Vatablus. Hence many stumbling at this stone interpreted it as a prevention of an objection that they might make for their own excuse, that they did but as Abraham did, who had Sarah to his wife, yet he took Hagar also. But Abraham did it, having an excellent spirit, and knowing what he did, expecting the promise of God concerning a blessed seed, and not knowing that he should receive him of Sarah, therefore took Hagar, that the promise might not be void; and he took Hagar with Sarah's consent. He had no children by Sarah, as you have; he despised not Sarah, as ye do; so that his fact and yours are much unlike. The Chaldee paraphrase seems to have laid this stone, and led to this exposition, and most of them that use the Vulgate follow it; and, among the protestants, Winkleman and Osiander, Lutherans. But St Jerome found out a righter, and Theodoret, Lyra, Remigius; and of moderns, Junius, Tarnovius, the Italian of Deodate, both in the text and margin, the Geneva, our old and our last English, do entertain it. 'Did not he (that is, God) make one?' God made one Eve for Adam, and therefore the first sanction of unity in marriage is not to be infringed. This sense also Menochius gives, though the translation that he is tied unto will not yield it.

*Yet had he the residue of the spirit*, or *the excellence*, so our margin. But I am not satisfied why our most learned translators have put it in; for I find not שאר in that signification; yet I will not conceal that the Tigurine, Vatablus, and Pagninus so translate it; and not only à Lapide, but Conrad. Kircher (in his Greek Concordance, who in the roots usually follows Forster, but in this Sanct. Pagninus, at the root שאר) tells us, that שאר signifies both *remainder* or *residue*, and *excellency*. However, the text reading of our last translation is here (as for aught I know everywhere else) to be preferred before the marginal; and the meaning is, God made but one woman for Adam, though he had the remainder of the spirit or breath, so that he could have made many. He gave part to Adam and the rest to Eve, and made no more in that extraordinary way, though it had been easy unto him; as our old English and the Geneva express it, 'he had abundance of spirit;' that is, that spirit or breath which he breathed into man.

*And wherefore one?* (מה for למה) *That he might seek a godly seed*, or, *a seed of God.* That is, God requires you should cleave to your wives, and not take the daughters of a strange god, lest your seed be educated in idolatry; so St Jerome: but I suppose there is more in it. The very issue of polygamy is spurious in some sense. It is not a godly seed, or the seed of God, that is, which he appoints, but accursed. Thus every member of these two verses have afforded several arguments against polygamy; but all this is to be understood to be against simultaneous polygamy, but not successive; against the having two wives at once, not against second marriages, though troops of the ancients (as Mr Gataker speaks in his *Treat. of Lots*, cap. viii. sect. 18), have condemned them; yet, as he saith, what divine or other doth now make doubt of them? Not protestants; see, instead of all, that sermon which, upon this verse, the late reverend and godly bishop of Bath and Wells, Dr Lake, preached and applied at the penance of a man that had two wives together; to which sermon I refer the reader for more upon this 15th verse. Nor papists; see Gregor. Tholosanus, *Syntag. Juris.* lib. ix. cap. 29; Guil. Cantarell. *Var. Quæst. in Decal.* lib. i. cap. 98, num. 426, 427; and, if you will, that great pretender to devotion, Nicholas Causin, the French Jesuit, in his *Holy Court*, part i. lib. iii. sect. 37. Though he discourse a long while upon this argument like a Montanist, as indeed all the church of Rome have a little tang of Montanism, in that, 1, they deny a blessing in the church to second marriages (see *Canones Ælfrici*, can. 9, *apud Spelman. Conc.* p. 574; but whether it be agreeable to the canon of Concil. Neocæsar., quoted by Gratian, *caus.* 31, *qu.* 1, *De his qui frequenter*, let the reader compare the places with the gloss at the letters *m* and *o*, and judge); and, 2, that they put bigamy (even successive bigamy) among 'irregularities,' as it is to be seen in their casuists and canonists. See *Excerptiones Egberti, ad An. Dom.* 750, *excerp.*

32 *and* 89, *apud D. H. Spelm. in Conc. Pambrit.* p. 261. The reason, such as it is, we have in Peter Damian, a devout author in a most corrupt time, *Lib. cui titulus*, DOMINUS NOBISCUM, cap. xii. *apud Joh. Cochlæi Speculum*, p. 156, who yet speaks of it with a *quis non miretur*, that bigamy (successive bigamy he speaks of), allowed by the ancient ecclesiastical canons, should be a greater irregularity and sin than fornication, expressly condemned in holy writ; but of this also enough, being only *obiter*. And thus much of the reprof of the sin. We have next,

2. A dehortation from this sin, in the latter part of the 15th verse, and verse 16, which is,

(1.) Propounded.

(2.) Repeated.

(1.) First, the dehortation is propounded: ver. 15, 'Therefore take heed unto your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith, that he hates putting away; for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts.'

*Take heed to your spirits.* The Geneva, 'keep yourselves in your spirit.' Remigius and Lyra, 'keep your spirit;' your wife is the residue of your spirit, keep and cherish her. The Tigurine, 'keep and preserve and tender your wives as dearly as you do your own souls.' Corn. à Lapide, 'Take heed to your breath;' you breathe on one another, breathe not on a stranger, keep thyself solely to thy wife. Conceited interpretations. Arias Montanus came nearer the sense, 'Be wary, and not rash.' I like best that of our commentary, 'Be sober and contain yourselves,' keep a watch upon your spirits and affections, to content yourselves with your lawful wives.

*And let none deal treacherously*, or *unfaithfully*. That is, in taking other wives; and when you are convinced of the sinfulness of keeping two wives, deal not treacherously to put away your old, pretending law for divorces, and that you may safely do it; for the Lord hates this treachery in making needless divorces, and thereby cloaking your sin. And this I take to be the meaning of these and the next words.

*For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith, That he hates putting away, for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord.* Deal not treacherously with your wives, after your vexing them by taking other wives unto them, then to put them away, and pretend that the law allows you to give them bills of divorce; for this is but the covering of your violence and injury with that garment or cloak; but the Lord is so far from allowing divorces in such cases, that he hates them.

*The Lord hateth putting away*, or *to put away*. The younger Tarnovius gives here the same sense with us. The Lord hates your שלח, *dimitte* (the imperative in Piel). You have *dimitte, dimitte*, much in your mouths, *put her away, put her away;* but the Lord hates your *dimitte*. So it is an ironical repetition of their own usual word, which the Lord rejects with indignation; or else he takes it for the infinitive in Piel, put for a noun, 'he hates to put away,' that is, 'putting away;' and so is our text reading. Our margin, indeed, is, 'If he hate her, put her away.' Pagninus otherwise, 'If she (that is, thy wife) hate thee (that is, be perverse), put her away.' The Geneva and our old English, 'If thou hatest her, put her away;' and so doth Zanchy read it in that discourse of divorces, which he wrote upon occasion of Andreas Pizzardus his divorce, as indeed agreeing best with the matter he undertook to defend; and so read the Vulgate, Vatablus, and, among others, Michael Walther, a Lutheran, in his *Harmonia Scripturæ*, lib. ii. sect. 185, follows this reading of the Vulgate, and therefore takes a needless pains in reconciling this place to that of Christ, Mat. xix. 11, for reading it aright, according to our last and approved translation, there is no ἀντιλογία at all between them. And Montanus tells us, that Rabbi Hananus, a Jewish interpreter, interprets it also as we do, 'God hates him who puts away his wife.'

*For one covereth violence with his garments.* The Vulgar Latin, 'But iniquity will cover his garment.' Cornelius à Lapide, who is bound to follow it, labours much to make good sense of it. First, he tells us we must take *his* for *thine*; put her away, but iniquity will, or shall, cover thy garment. But how is that meant? 1. Iniquity, that is, the punishment of thy iniquity, shall cover thy garment; that is, shall be upon thy body in regard of diseases, &c. 2. Upon thy garment; that is, thou shalt be punished in thy clothing, naked, ragged, &c. 3. Punishment shall be upon thee, the garment taken for the man; thou shalt be openly punished. Thus he from others for the Vulgate, of which translation Stephen Menochius, a latter Jesuit, gives another sense. The Jews excuse themselves, Why do you reprehend us, seeing the law permits us to put away our wives? If thou hate her, put her away; but (which he makes the prophet's answer) your iniquity shall thereby so abound and swell, that no garment will be able to cover it; the law permitting it only for the hardness of your hearts, but not freeing you from sin, if rashly and without cause you put them away. A better sense than that of à Lapide, but for which he is fain to take his farewell of the authorised vulgar translation. 'If thou put her away, give her some part of thy garments to cover her,' something to live on. So Luther occasionally expounds it, which sense Osiander follows: give her a good dowry, that if she be put away, she may marry another. Let him put her away, for while he keeps her he covers his injury, and makes as if he loved her; so the Geneva, and Winkleman. Much like to the Chaldee paraphrase, 'Put her away, and cover not thy hatred with a pretence that thou lovest her and keepest her,' and makest her a drudge. Vatablus is singular, as if their fault were that they put away their wives and covered

their iniquity under a garment, that is, discovered not their fault, as the law required they should; and so wanting a formal bill of divorce they were made uncapable of a second marriage, and so they added to the injury. Some take it for an irony: Put her away, do so, but thy sin shall overtake thee. All these mistake the sense. I rest in that above. The Lord hates needless divorces, and the more when the law is pretended; for one, that is, the man that doth this, doth but daub, and colour, and cloak his sin.

*His iniquity.* חמס, oppression, or injury, or wrong. So Gen. xvi. 5. חמסי 'My wrong be upon thee.'

2. The dehortation is again repeated: 'Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously;' of which before. And thus much of the fourth contestation.

V. THE FIFTH CONTESTATION.

Fifthly, he contests with them for their contumely and blasphemy against God and his providence, as if God were not just, or took no notice of the affairs of men, ver. 17 to ver. 7 of chap. iii. where observe,

1. Their blasphemy, ver. 17.

2. The answer that is made unto it, chap. iii. ver. 1–6.

(1.) First, Their blasphemy and unworthy contumelies against God: ver. 17, 'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words, yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in him, or, Where is the God of judgment?' You have added this sin to the rest, that by your atheistical conceits and blasphemous speeches ye have wearied and vexed me, saith the Lord; in that you call in question my being, and my justice, and my providence.

*Ye have wearied the Lord.* LXX, 'provoked;' Chaldee, 'molested or cumbered.' The Tigurine and Arias, 'wearied and toiled;' Vatablus, 'troubled.' We have the same word, Isa. xliii. 24, הוגעתני, 'Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities;' which is further set out in the words next before, 'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins.' So here, ye have wearied and toiled me that I am weary, I cannot bear your words.

*Ye say, He that doth evil is good in the sight of the Lord.* That is, accepted and approved of him; an usual phrase among the Hebrews, which is clear by the next.

*And he delighteth in him.* An high accusation of God for injustice, that he should justify the wicked, nay more, take pleasure in him.

*Or where, &c. Or* is either a new accusation of God; ye say thus, he delights in the wicked, or ye say thus, 'Where is the God,' &c.; or else it is their proof that they bring of their former accusation of God's justice; he delights in the wicked, or else where is the God of judgment? or as the French, otherwise where is the God of judgment? If he did not delight in him, he would punish him.

*Where is the God of judgment?* המשפט, of *that* judgment. ה demonstrative, hath great emphasis, where is the God of that, *i.e.* of that great, exact, free, just, precise, impartial judgment, which respects neither persons nor gifts, but only justice, (as his character is usually given by the prophets), where is he? LXX, 'The God of righteousness;' Chaldee, 'The God who doth judgment.' This was their sin, their blasphemy against God. We have in the next chapter,

2. Secondly, the answer that is made unto their blasphemy, chap. iii. ver. 1 to the 7th. Ye say, where is the God of judgment? It shall appear, saith the Lord, that I am the God of judgment, when the Messiah shall come into the world (as he shall come shortly), who shall dispense mercy and comfort to the godly, but judgment and evil to evil men. St Jerome also and Theodoret allow of this context and resolution. We have this laid down in a prophecy of Christ and his forerunner, the coming of them both.

(1.) The coming of the forerunner, the Baptist.

(2.) The coming of the Messiah.

(1.) The coming of the forerunner, part of the first verse, where,

[1.] His coming.

[2.] His work.

[1.] His coming: 'Behold I will send my messenger.' *Behold*, to the question which (it appears by ה the demonstrative) they would have to be taken notice of; they receive an answer which carries with it a note of pregnancy, used by the prophets concerning things eminent and certain, to make men attent.

*I will send.* It may be taken to be the speech of Christ himself, according to that of Luke i. 76, where John Baptist is called his prophet, or the speech of God as it is, Mat. xi. 10.

*My messenger* or *angel*, for so it is in the Hebrew, of which see before, chap. i. 1, chap. ii. 7. See also Dan. Heinsius his *Exercit. Sacræ*, lib. 5, cap. 4 in Acts vii. 53, in which place, and Gal. iii. 19, and Heb. ii. 2, by *angels* he understands the *prophets;* as he doth also, 1 Tim. iii. 16, *Exercit.* lib. 14, cap. iii. To me (I confess) a new exposition of those places, having sometime heretofore, in a *brief comment on some part to the Galatians*, given another interpretation, which the reader, if he please, may there see, though I have there also noted that the exposition which is now offered by that most learned Heinsius, was anciently St Ambrose his. [If any shall vouchsafe to see my reasons for interpreting the word *angels* properly in that place of Gal. iii. 19, let him please also to correct an error in the same page 163, where, whether it were through the mistake of the printer or transcriber of my copy, *The same epistler* is put for *The same apostle*, a title most unworthy of that great and chosen vessel, being that which we use for sorry and worthless letter-scribblers. But this only by the way, because I would not leave any title of diminution upon that great

apostle.] To return to the text. This messenger or angel is John the Baptist, as the exposition is put out of all controversy by Christ, Mat. xi. 10, 'This is he of whom it is spoken, Behold,' &c. None doubt but it is meant of John; but who John should be hath been some doubt. He is called an angel, and Origen thought he was one, and so thought the latter Jews, because of his hermitical life; but St Jerome concludes sounder, he was an angel in office, not in nature. In nature he was a man, and we know whose son he was: 'A man sent from God,' John i. 6. From God he had his instruction: we find no other teaching he had. Some take messenger, *Sylleptice* for all the prophets, if any, between Malachi and Christ; but that it must be meant of one, see Junius his *Parallel.* lib. 1, par. 50. Thus of the coming of John.

[2.] His work: 'He shall prepare the way before me.' The French, 'accoutre or dress the way.' It is a metaphor from the use of kings, who when they go in progress, their messengers and harbingers go before them to fit and make all ready; and in the way, the greatest ministers of state go next before the king. Many prophets went before Christ; but John the Baptist went next him, before his face, hard by, near before him, as St Chrysostom speaks on Mat. xi.; and therefore Christ calls him, in respect of other prophets, 'the greatest born of women.' He came as the dean of the choir, *chorum prophetarum claudens.* He was born a little before Christ was born. It was the sixth month with Elizabeth when the blessed virgin conceived; and so he came into the world but a little before his master, to prepare the way by preaching repentance, by baptizing, by giving testimony unto Christ, by taking up lodgings in the hearts of men for Christ. 'He shall sweep the way;' so Pagninus. פנה, is to *remove all obstacles and impediments*, and all filth out of the way and out of sight. Zeph. iii. 15, it is rendered, *cast out:* 'He hath cast out thine enemy;' Ps. lxxx. 9, 'to make room.' Tremellius reads it, 'to clear the way;' that is, to take out all stumbling-blocks and obstacles; see Isa. lvii. 14, and Isa. lxii. 10. And what John was to do, see Isa. xl. 3, Luke i. 76–78. Let me also observe here, that because of this office of his to go before Christ, and to serve for a time or season till the appearing of Christ, who rose as the sun doth in the morning (and so he is called 'the sun' in the next chapter), that for this reason, I say, John is called 'a burning and a shining light,' in whose light the Jews did 'rejoice for a season,' as it is John v. 35. Lights and candles are of good use, and do service till the morning appears or the sun rises; and therefore lamps were kept burning in the temple till the morning, as we find, 1 Sam. iii. 3, where it is said, that the Lord called to Samuel, 'before the lamp of God went out in the temple;' that is, before it was morning. So in the dark night of things under the law, the prophets were lights, and especially John was a 'burning light for that season,' till that Christ manifest himself, and then it was day. And thus much of the coming and office of the forerunner.

2. The coming of Christ the Messiah. We have,

(1.) His person, ver. 1.

(2.) His coming, ver. 1.

(3.) His power, ver. 2.

(4.) The effects of His coming, ver. 3–6.

(1.) First, His person: 'The Lord whom ye seek, the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in.' Christ the Messiah is set out unto them by these two names.

*The Lord*, האדון, *ille Dominus. The* Lord by an excellence, *ὁ κύριος, Dominator*, as the Vulgate. (Of this appellative *Adon*, see before, chap. i. ver. 14.) Some Hebrews, whom Remigius also follows, understand by the *messenger*, Elias; and by *the Lord*, the Dominator, antichrist; but the following words declare the unsoundness of this interpretation, where he is called 'the angel of the covenant.' Theodorus Mopsuestenus, infected with the heresy of the Ebionites, who denied the divinity of Christ (as Arius after), understood by *the Lord* here, Ezra, or some such person who should restore the Jewish worship, which error was damned by the fathers of the fifth general council, and about the same time at Rome under Vigilius. Of late Eniedenus the Socinian (*in explic., loc. V. et N. Test.*) hath quarrelled such texts, in which the title of Lord is given unto Christ, as John xx. 28, for the vindication of which and the like texts, see that late industrious divine, Gasp. Brockman, *System. tom.* i. *art.* v. *cap.* 2 *qu.* 3. The Rabbins also pervert such places; see John Alstedi, *paratitla theo. in verbo* DOMINUS.

*Whom ye seek.* They had a certain notion of the Messiah, and were in expectation of him. But the most part had hope and expectation of corporal deliverance only by him, as John Deodate notes.

*The angel* or *messenger of the covenant.* Christ is here set out by his sacerdotal office. He that was covenanted for, or promised; or he that should administer the covenant.

*Whom ye delight in.* They delighted in his day, though afar off, according to that John viii. 56. See the elder Tarnovius, in *Dub. ad* iv. *partem, c.* viii. *Joh. qu.* 18. The Geneva, 'whom ye desire.' We have that phrase, Haggai ii. 8. He was four thousand years desired, and earnestly, see Gen. xlix. 18, Isa. lxiv. 1.

(2.) Secondly, His coming: 'He shall suddenly come to his temple: Behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.'

*Suddenly.* It is the same word that is used Ps. lxiv. 7, and Isa. xxx. 13. The Geneva, 'speedily;' yet it was 500 years after Malachi before Christ was born; a short time in respect of the long expectation of the patriarchs. But after John, Christ came suddenly; he was conceived speedily within a few months after John, and born speedily after John's birth, and

taught publicly speedily after John's preaching and baptizing.

*He shall come to his temple.* Pagninus had rendered it so; but Montanus in his correction, 'to his palace.' היכל signifies *a palace* or *a court*, 1 Kings xxi. 1. Naboth's vineyard was hard by the palace of Ahab (*Hecal Ahab*). And though the word be used for the temple, yet peculiarly for that part of the temple which is called the palace or the court, which was the greater part, the middle part between the porch and the oracle; answerable to which, ναός, *a temple*, in the restrained use of the word, is now only taken for the body of the church; but the whole temple is here called by that name, as Christians also have called the churches or houses of God, *Basilicæ*. See Stephen Duranti, *De Ritibus Eccl.* lib. i. cap. i. sec. 8, 9. To the material temple, and in the literal sense, Christ was to come, as to the solemn place of his appearance, as when the Lord came to or among the people of old. He came into and 'filled his house with his glory.' So Christ came to his temple, when he was presented there a child, Luke ii. So the church of Rome seems to understand this, by appointing in her liturgy (which we had: *Missale sec. usum Sarum; in offic. propriis*, page 12), these words for the day of the purification. But especially he came thither when afterward he preached and wrought miracles there; for we cannot understand by the temple, either the womb of the virgin, as St Cyril; or the flesh and incarnation of Christ, according to that John ii. 19, as Theodoret and St Augustine, and to which the learned Heinsius (though he also give that other sense of the material temple), seems to me to incline, *Exercit. Sacræ.*, cap. ii. in John ii. 19. Yet I shall easily agree with the reverend author of the following commentary, wherein also I think he follows St Jerome, that the end of Christ's coming is also at least intimated, that Christ comes to make up a spiritual temple or church of Christians. To which agrees the margin of the Italian Bible, 'He shall come to the temple at Jerusalem, the figure of the church.'

(3.) Thirdly, His power: ver. 2, 'But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.' The power and majesty of Christ is here discovered by variety of expression.

*Who may abide the day of his coming?* Vulgate, 'Who can think?' that is, who can think of all the glory, graces, benefits of that day? The LXX and the Chaldee, 'Who can sustain?' That is, who can endure the light of it, we being as owls unto the sun. Who will not be astonished and melt? Vatablus his note is, Who will endure the tribulations of Christians that will follow upon his coming? Winkleman, Who will be able to stand in the reformations that Christ will proceed upon? Our comment, the wicked will not be able to abide Christ's preaching, but will be destroyed by it. כלכל in Piel is, to *comprehend, contain, sustain, bear.* I suppose the word is to be taken here in that sense that it is Prov. xviii. 14, 'The spirit of a man, יכלכל, *will sustain* his infirmity.'

*And who shall stand when he appeareth?* The Geneva, 'who shall endure.' Who is so hard and flinty, or so made of iron, whom that sight will not break? who so rebellious that will not be wrought upon? So Sanchez *in loc.* But others take the place as comparing Christ's coming to the sun in his rising, at whose magnificence and brightness all are dazzled and amazed. So the LXX, Chaldee, Vulgate, Vatablus, Pagninus. There are that understand this whole period of Christ's coming to judgment, and among others Gerard Vossius upon Ephraem's sermon, *De secundo adventu Domini.* But most understand it of Christ's coming in the flesh, the several interpretations of which place, Dan. Chamier, *Panstr. tom.* 3, *lib.* 26, *cap.* 4, hath plentifully collected, where he clears this place, especially the latter part of the verse, from the fingers of such as pervert it to establish purgatory.

*For he is like a refiner's fire.* Geneva, 'a purging fire;' the LXX, 'the fire of a forge;' Vulgate, 'a forging fire;' Deodate's Italian, 'as the fire of him that founds metals.' So we have the word where the same metaphor is followed, Isa. xlviii. 10, צרפתיך, 'I have refined thee; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.' And Judges vii. 4, 'I will try them.' A boiling or melting fire, so Pagninus; as it is Isa. i. 26, 'I will purge away thy dross, and take away thy tin.' So also Jer. ix. 7; see in Corn. à Lapide five reasons why Christ is compared to fire.

*And like fuller's soap.* LXX, 'as washer's herb;' Vulgate, 'as fuller's herb;' and so the Tigurine from St Jerome in Jer. ii. 22, 'Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much (ברית) soap;' who saith there that *borith* is an herb growing in springing and moist places of Palestine, and of the same use with nitre. That which we call *saponaria*, in English *soapweed* or *soapwort*, Deodate's Italian in the text renders it, 'the herb which scoureth cloth.' In the margin, 'cudwoort or cottonweed,' which the fullers use. Vatablus, Pagninus, Tremellius render it 'soap.' Arias leaves the Hebrew word untranslated, 'like fuller's *borith*.' The word comes of ברר, to make pure, clean, or white. Thence בור and ברית, anything that hath force to cleanse garments from spots or stains. Therefore the Chaldee, 'He is like that by which clothes are made white.' But our last translation renders it *soap* here, and Jer. ii. 22; which, what it is, besides the ordinary knowledge of it now-a-days, appears by that of Pliny, lib. 28, c. xii. 7. *Prodest et sapo; Gallorum inventum ex sevo et cinere.* Both the Arabics read *sulphur*, not (as I suppose) according to Cornelius à Lapide his conjecture, taking ברית for גפרית, which indeed signifies *sulphur* in the Chaldee, but upon a much easier mistake in unpointed Hebrew, where the word is כברית, and in the Arabian כברית is sulphur. But I submit this also as a conjecture

(3.) The effects of Christ's coming, vers. 3–6.

[1.] In respect of the godly, vers. 3, 4.

[2.] In respect of the wicked, vers. 5, 6.

[1.] In respect of the godly, the effect of his coming is very salutary and comfortable, vers, 3, 4; where consider,

*First*, His work, ver. 3.

*Secondly*, The end of his work, ver. 4.

*First*, His work: ver. 3, 'And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.' Christ comes to cleanse and purify his people.

*He shall sit.* Geneva, 'He shall sit down to try.' Some refer it to express Christ as a judge, who sits to inquire and discern right from false. But the phrase rather notes the accurate, serious, and assiduous doing of a thing. Deodate gives both.

*As a refiner.* Vulgate, 'As a melter in a forge.'

*And purifier.* טהר is most ordinarily used for to be clean or pure from sin. And thence *tahor* is *pure, innocent*, or *holy*. But it is used also as here. God is compared to a refiner and purifier, as the priests are in the next words to silver and gold.

*And he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them.* Christ will make the priests brighter. The French, 'He shall make neat,' or 'clean the sons of Levi.' Vulgate, *colabit*; he shall strain them, as some liquor or liquid matter is transmitted or strained through a narrow vessel, sieve, or cloth, so that the purer part may go through, and the dreggy may be left. The LXX, 'He shall pour forth' as metal which is melted. Pagninus, 'He shall melt them.' Montanus, 'He shall boil them.' The Chaldee reads as we do, 'He shall purge them.' Theodoret understood this of the conversion of many Levites to the faith of Christ, as Joses, Acts iv. 36, and many priests, Acts vi. 7. St Jerome, Remigius, Rupertus, Lyranus, &c., understand it of a new order of Levites to be instituted for the service of the gospel. And we know that the ministers of the gospel are prophesied of under that name, and of priests, Isa. lxvi. 21. See the learned Conference with Hart, *chap.* 8, *division* 4, *page* 470. But John Deodate interprets it of all true Christians, and refers to Rev. i. 6, Rom. xii. 1. Him I assent to.

*Secondly*, The end of his work in purging them. 'That they may offer unto the Lord an offering.' The Geneva, 'That they may bring offerings.' The word is *mincha* here too, of which see before. He still speaks in the prophetical phrase. They shall be purged, that they may serve God purely and acceptably, or offer an offering pure and acceptable.

First, A pure offering. 'That they may offer an offering in righteousness;' that is, holily and purely performed, according as is required. See the phrase, Ps. li. 19.

Secondly, An acceptable offering: ver. 4, 'Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant to the Lord. And so the Vulgate, 'acceptable;' so the Geneva, Chaldee, 'shall be entertained freely;' Vatablus and Pagninus, 'shall be sweet.' So we have rendered it, Jer. vi. 20, 'Nor your sacrifices, ערבו־לי, sweet unto me.' That the place is meant of the service of the church as it is now, I doubt not; but that Judah is the Latin church, and Jerusalem Rome, as Ribera would have it, I pass as a partial fancy of a Romish interpreter.

*As in the days of old, and in the former or ancient times.* As acceptable as were the sacrifices which Abel, Noah, Melchisedec, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, &c., offered.

[2.] The effects of his coming in respect of the wicked, exitial and terrible, vers. 5, 6; where we may consider,

*First*, The judgment, ver. 5.

*Secondly*, The certainty of the judgment, verse 6.

*First*, The judgment, verse 5, where,

First, What it is.

Secondly, Against whom.

First, What the judgment is. 'And I will come near to you in judgment, and I will be a swift witness against,' &c. You said, Where is the God of judgment? I will make it appear unto you that I am he. The Tigurine, 'I will come and I will draw near:' a phrase like that Gen. xviii. 21, 'I will go down and see,' that I may punish. A metaphor from the custom of itinerary justices, or judges that hold assizes in their circuits. I know that most interpreters, ancient and others, who understand the former of Christ's first coming, do think this is meant of his second; for which I cannot see reason, but rather think this to be the sense. Though the coming of the Messiah bring so much comfort along with it, and bring salvation to the world, yet against such as continue in their sins, and thereby increase the guilt of them the more, by how much more grace is offered unto them, against such I will come to judgment, and will be a swift witness against them. And thus I make it to be the speech of God taken *substantialiter* (who is in the end of the verse again called, 'The Lord of hosts,' as all along the prophecy), and not *personaliter*, for Christ, which interpretation notwithstanding I do submit, as I do all the rest.

*And I will be a swift witness against.* 'An hasty witness,' so the Tigurine; Vatablus, 'ready;' Tremellius, 'most speedy.' The LXX as we, ἔσομαι μάρτυς ταχὺς, 'a swift witness.' The trope here also is a metaphor, and the affection of the metaphor seems to be a catachresis, *witness* being put for *judge*. I will soon, upon the evidence of your fact, give judgment against you. Among men, the witness and the judge must be distinct. That of John Bodin, *de Republ.* lib. 6 page 1185, is generally received. If the fact be only known to the judge, he may be a witness of it, but a judge he cannot be. And to the question, whether a judge be bound to give sentence *secundum allegata et probata?* the canons speak affirmatively (Gratian. *Caus.* 2, *qu.*

1 *et* 7, *Plerunque, &c.*). And so also (to omit others) it is determined by the learned Henry Bocerus, *de Jurisdict, cap.* 6, *sect.* 34, and by John Weemse, *Exercit. vol.* 2, *lib.* 2, *cap.* 17. And there is reason it should be so among men. But God, being infinitely present, an eye-witness of every fact; and infinitely wise, free from all possibility of error; and infinitely holy, out of all suspicion of being corrupted; may be, and is, both witness and judge. See for further light, Gen. xxxi. 50, Judges xi. 10, 1 Samuel xii. 5, Job xvi. 19, Jeremiah xxix. 23, John viii. 16, 17, 18. See also John Buxtorfius, *in Comment. Masoret. cap.* 14, *in Litera* ר. We have seen thus what the judgment is.

Secondly, Against whom it is. Against, 1, sorcerers; 2, adulterers; 3, false swearers; 4, oppressors of hirelings; 5, oppressors of widows and fatherless; 6, oppressors of strangers; 7, such as fear not God.

First, 'Against the sorcerers.' The LXX. ἐπί τους φαρμακούς, *sorcerers* or *poisoners*. But of *pharmaci*, φαρμακεία, see Rhodigin, *Antiqu. lect. lib.* 6, *cap.* 12, *lib.* 9, *cap.* 23. The Hebrew is מכשף, and that is, he that exercises delusions and juggling sleights, so that a thing is made to appear otherwise unto one's eyes than indeed it is, Exodus vii. 11, 12, upon which two verses the reader may satisfy himself in the second disputation and the nine following, of Ben. Pererius *in cap.* 7, *Exod.*, to whom, and to Delrio and Wierus, I refer him for curiosities of this argument. The word is here translated, 'a sorcerer,' but usually 'a witch,' as Exodus xxii. 18, 2 Chronicles xxxiii. 6, Deut. xviii. 10, in which one text are reckoned up the several sorts of divinations that are forbidden, all which are fully explicated by Mr Gataker in his *Treatise of Lots*; and all which are to be understood here under this one head. Concerning which, and the several cases about them, besides the popish casuists, Cajetan *Peccat, Summ. in verbo*, DIVINATIO; Silvester, *in eod. Tit.*; Tollet, *instructio Sacerd. lib.* 4, cap. 14, 15; Guil. Cantarell, *Var. Quæst. lib.* 2 *num.* 474; Bizozerus, *Sum. Cas. part* 2, *cap.* 4, *mem.* 5, 6; Fumi, *Armil. Aurea, verbo* DIVINATIO; Reginald, *praxis fori pœnit, lib.* 17, *cap.* 16, 17; Martin Bresser, *de consc. lib.* 6, *cap.* 21; and ours, Mr Perkins, *of Witchcraft*; John Alsted, *Theol. Cas. cap.* 13, *sect.* 11; Andrew Rivet, *Prælect. in Exodus* xx. *page* 30; Gasper Brockmond, *System. Theol. tom.* 2, *art.* 18, *cap.* 18, *cas.* 11, 12, 13, *ad* 20; see also many things to the purpose of this place, in Gabriel Pennot, *Propugnac. hum. libert. lib.* 10; John Wolphius, *in addit. ad Pet. Mart.* 2, *in reg.* 21, *page* 404; and in Weemse, *Degen. sons, The Magician.*

Secondly, 'And against the adulterer.' The LXX translate it into the feminine, μοιχαλίδας, *adulteresses*. It is the masculine in the Hebrew. Under this head also may be referred all the sins usually treated of by divines and casuists under the seventh commandment, a sin sentenced and severely punished by the laws of nations, even the very heathen. For the Athenians, Lacedæmonians, Romans, see Plutarch, *in Parall. passim*. For other nations, Alex. ab. Alex. *Genial. Dier. lib.* 4, *cap.* 1, and Rhodigin, *lect. Antiqu. lib.* 21, *cap.* 45, 47. For the old French, it is a notable story which is related by John Tritenhemius, *de Orig. Francorum*, page 304 (in the first tome of the *Opus Historicum* at Basil, collected by Simon Schardius, as is thought and conjectured by the printer) of Basan the king and high priest of the Sicambri, who were ancestors to the French, that as his laws were severe against adultery and other like crimes, so he also was so strict in the execution of them, that he caused a sword and an halter to be carried before him withersoever he went; and finding an accusation to be true against his own son Sedanus, that he had committed adultery, he judged him to death; and when his nobles entreated him to reverse his sentence, he said, Strive not against justice; you may sooner restrain the windfrom blowing in the air, than turn Basanus's mind aside from the law; and turning to his son he said, I kill thee not, my son, but the law which thou hast broken; and therewithal, in zeal to justice, he slew him with his own hand. This was about 280 years before Christ. But especially for our own ancestors, the old Saxons, it is an observable testimony which Corn. Tacitus, *Descr. Germ.*, gives of their severity against this sin, upon which place Andrew Althamer, and Jodocus Willichius, in their commentaries upon Tacitus, do take occasion (and justly too in my opinion) to condemn the remissness of this age in punishing more sharply what those times of ignorance did abhor. But I would rather in this point commend unto the reader, that zealous and effectual epistle of our countryman, Boniface, archbishop of Mentz, unto Ethelbald, king of the Mercians here in England, where he relates that severity of the Saxons, and urgeth much against this sin. The epistle is in the Magdeburg Centuriators, *Cent.* 8, *cap.* 9, and from them in Mr Fox's Martyrology. And it seems there was much need of sharp writing at that time, when the people generally by the king's example were given unto this sin, and like fed horses neighing after their neighbours' wives, as appears by another epistle from the said Boniface to Heresfrid, a godly priest, who, as it seems, was sometimes called to preach in the court of Ethelbald, and might work upon him.

Thirdly, 'And against false swearers.' LXX, 'that swear by my name upon a lie'; Pagninus, 'that swear lyingly;' Vulgate, 'perjurers.' What the sin is, and how great, see the casuists and others on the third commandment. And how God hath punished it, if there were no other example, the lamentable issue of the battle at Varna, where Vladislaus the king of Hungary, and Julian the cardinal, were miserably defeated by the Turk, will be a sufficient monument to all succeeding times. We have also two pregnant instances in Eadmerus his *Historia Novorum*, published by the learned Selden, lib. i. p. 5, 6, and lib.

v. p. 124, 125. But the sin here is not only perjury, when an oath taken is not kept, but the very taking of a false oath. So Piscator, according to the Hebrew, 'that swear unto a false thing;' it may be rendered adverbially, 'that swear falsely,' and to that sense our translation. A sin it is of an high nature, for first there is a lie, and then an oath made upon a lie.

Fourthly, 'And against those that oppress (or defraud) the hireling in his wages.' The Geneva, 'that wrongfully keep back the hirelings' wages;' the Vulgate, 'who make cavils to detain wages'; the Chaldee and LXX, 'who take away wages by violence;' and so Pagninus. The word עשק will bear all these. It is *to defraud by calumny*, (συκοφαντεῖν) *or by guile, or by force.* This was Laban's sin. Jacob complains of him, that he dealt hardly with him, and deceived him, and changed his wages ten times, Gen. xxxi. 7, 41. He changed his wages ten times, that is, often, as the phrase is taken, Num. xiv. 22, Job. xix. 3; or it may be, he did indeed ten times in Jacob's six years' service change his wages, which by agreement was to arise from the lambs that were yeaned, which in Mesopotamia (which was the country where Jacob kept Laban's flock) yeaned twice a-year; but Laban, partly through covetousness, and partly through envy at Jacob's thriving, might haply every half year be altering the agreement; which was St Augustine's conjecture, and is followed by Junius and Parens, though they followed not his mistake occasioned by the Septuagint in reading the place, 'Thou hast deceived me of my wages in ten lambs.' Of which, see Sixtin. Amama, in his *Antibarb. Biblic.*, p. 427, 428, who censures both the reading and the interpretation. But to me, whatever becomes of the reading, yet it seems the interpretation may stand good. This sin cries in the ears of God, James v. 4; and hath a woe against it, Jer. xxii. 13; and was specially provided against in the law under Moses, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. The wages of the labourer must be paid as soon as he hath done his work, because he 'setteth his heart upon,' or 'lifteth his soul unto it;' that is, he hath no other livelihood, nothing else whereby to maintain his life, or to trust unto.

Fifthly, 'And against those that oppress the widow and the fatherless.' So I read it with this supply, though the verb be not again repeated, but is to be repeated from the former member to make the sense clear. The LXX, 'against them who oppress widows by their power, and strike or beat the fatherless.'

*The widow.* אלמנה. 'The solitary, or silent, or forsaken, as Jer. li. 5, 'Israel hath not been (Hebrew, widowed) forsaken;' and Isa. xiii. 22. 'Desolate houses' are called in Hebrew, 'widows.' See the metaphor, Lam. i. 1, which is like unto that of Virgil, Æneid, viii.

'Tam multis viduasset civibus urbem.'

See Gen. xxxviii. 11–14, 2 Sam. xx. 3, Isa. xlvii. 8; or the widow in the Hebrew is called *silent*, because her husband being dead, she cannot so well speak in her own cause, or for her own defence. Therefore God's care of widows was always great, Exod. xxii. 22, Deut. x. 18, and xxiv. 17, Ps. xlix. 9, and lxviii. 5, Jer. xlix. 11. And in the Christian church the apostles took care of them, and specially for their sakes ordained deacons, who might see that they should not be neglected, Acts vi. 1. A place pertinently observed and used by the widow of John Knobbarus the printer, in her epistle dedicatory to the bishop of Antwerp, before the late Jesuit Bresserus his book, *De Conscientia.* This care was continued by St Paul, 1 Tim. v. 3, and after by many bishops.* Yet at last the pontifician law grew strait and hard towards them, wherein, as Gregory Tholosan. hath it, *Syntag. Juris.*, lib. ix. cap. xxvi. s. 14, it was provided, that the money bequeathed for pious uses, to the endowing and marrying of poor women, might in no case be bestowed upon widows marrying again, though they were poor.

*The fatherless.* יתום is an 'orphan,' a 'pupil,' destitute of father or help. See it clearly, Lam. v. 3, 'We are (*Jethomim*) orphans, and without father.' The LXX, here and constantly, translate it, ὀρφανὸς, but in one place, namely, Ps. lxxxii. 3, they render it, πτωχὸς, *poor.* The fatherless and the widows are frequently joined together in the same texts, and so they are in God's care. The ancient church was tender of them, thence it was that *Brephotrophi*, as they were called, were appointed for the charge of exposed infants whose fathers were not known; and *Orphanotrophi*, to see to the bringing up of other infants; a practice worthily followed and imitated by the rare zeal and charity of our blessed King Edward the Sixth, who, upon occasion of the bishop of London's sermon, besides Bridewell and St Thomas's Hospital, disposed to other charitable uses, was the glorious founder of Christ's Hospital, for the relief of fatherless children. It were easy to outvie the popish and to parallel the ancient times with examples of charity in this kind since the Reformation; among others, that honourable and reverend prelate, Dr Andrews, lord bishop of Winchester, shines not more in his learned writings, which yet make him famous in the gates, than in his legacies to the poor, among which this was not the least commendable, that he gave fifty pounds *per annum* to the binding of poor orphans to be apprentices: a man deserving all the honour and right which those honourable and learned personages have done him, who have gratified the English church with the history of his life. But I must take myself off from this argument, remembering that these excursions will haply be judged by some to be too frequent, and not

* It is a testimony of great honour, and a character fit for a bishop, which Matthew of Westminster gives to Gilbert, bishop of Chichester, in King Edward the First's time, that he was the father of orphans and the comforter of widows.

proper for these short notes. I confess it, yet who would not be large, upon the least occasion given, in the just commendations of those rare examples, especially when so many on the contrary do build up their estates and houses upon the ruins and distresses of orphans and pupils committed to their trust? The sin that is here threatened in the text, and questionless a great sin, and provided against fully in the ancient law; so that in the institutions of Justinian we have fourteen titles, ΠΕΡΙ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΩΝ, lib. i. tit. 13, &c. And Gregory Thosolanus hath found enough to collect to make two books, in his *Syntagma*, lib. xii. and xiii., with whom I leave the reader.

Sixthly, 'And against those that turn aside the stranger;' that is, 'from his right,' as our last translation supplies it even in the text. The Geneva and Vulgate, 'against those that oppress the stranger;' the LXX and the Chaldee, 'that pervert the judgment of the stranger.' See how it is expressed, Exod. xxiii. 6, 'Thou shalt not wrest the judgment.'

*The stranger*, גר, is he that dwells where he was not born, or one that hath dwelt but a while where he doth, and so, through want of friends and of acquaintance with the law, is more easily to be wronged; for whose defence, therefore, God provided by many laws. See Exod. xxii. 21, and xxiii. 9, Deut. x. 18, 19, Lev. xix. 33, 34, Jer. xxii. 3, Ezek. xlvi. 18, Zech. vii. 10.

Seventhly, 'And against those that fear not me, saith the Lord.' The particulars before mentioned are summed up in this, which is the fountain also and head of other sins, and that against which the Lord will come near in judgment. As *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*, and where the fear of God is, it will command the heart and restrain from sin; so the little or no fear of God, argues that men cherish little or no belief of God; when, according to the ingenious conceit of Nicholas Caussin the Jesuit, in his table or picture of worldly policy, *Holy Court*, pt. ii., *The Statesman*, sect. ii., in a chamber hideously black, the study of Lucifer, the brave spirits of the time, under the regency of Herod and Tiberius, do study to find out the way how to believe in God no longer. The truth is, while most men, instead of contending for the faith, have but wrangled about the differences of religions, they are grown irreligious, and into a disposition unto atheism; which, how it may be discovered and cured, will be worthy the labour of all such who are set over men for the cure of their souls. Thus we have seen the judgment threatened, and against whom.

*Secondly*, The certainty of the judgment: ver. 6, 'For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' Or, as the Vulgate, and Montanus, and the Geneva read it, 'I change not, and ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' It is the reason of what was before said and threatened. You say, I regard not to punish or reward, but though I defer a while, yet I will come near to judgment, for I constantly love good and hate evil, I change not. So Cyril, Theodoret, Remigius, Rupertus, Hugo, Lyranus, Vatablus, &c. For the latter clause of this sixth verse, I shall, with submission, take leave to depart from our learned translators, and read not as they, *therefore*, but as Montanus, and as it is in the Hebrew, *and:* I change not, and ye sons of Jacob are not consumed; *and*, that is, *and yet*. Though I threatened you, and change not, yet my patience is such that ye are spared, and not yet consumed. But I leave this place to such as can better search the prophet's mind, for here I confess I do take off my own unskilful pen without clear satisfaction in myself about the coherence of this verse, especially this latter clause, with the verses precedent. The reader may find it somewhat otherwise expressed in Tarnovius. And thus much of the fifth contestation.

VI. THE SIXTH CONTESTATION.

Sixthly, He contests with them for their impenitence, ver. 7; that they had sinned, and continued in sin, and yet would not be convinced.

1. That they had continued in sinning against God's laws: 'Even from the days of your fathers, ye have gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them.' He exprobates their old and inveterate trade of sinning.

'From mine ordinances.' Vulgate, *a legitimis meis;* that is, as they tell us, who, being bound to receive the vulgar Latin as authentic, do study to make the best sense of it, *a legibus meis*. You are gone from my laws; the Tigurine, 'my statutes;' Pagninus, 'my institutes.' The things which I have described, drawn out, constituted, of חקק.

2. That they would not yet be convinced; which is urged,

(1.) By a declaration of God's grace in exhorting them and encouraging them to repentance.

[1.] Exhorting them, 'Return unto me, saith the Lord;' that is, by repentance. שוב, among many other uses that it put unto, signifies *to repent*, as Deut. xxx. 2, 1 Kings viii. 33, 35, Lam. iii. 40, Hosea vii. 16, and in many texts. God, though he might consume them, offers them mercy, and shews them a means to prevent his wrath.

[2.] Encouraging them. 'And I will return unto you, saith the Lord; that is, I will shew you favour. This is another use and signification of the word שוב when it is applied unto God. So Zech. i. 3.

(2.) By their stiffness and difficulty to be convinced. 'But ye say, Wherein shall we return?' As if they were righteous, and needed no repentance. This is the nature of man, to make contradiction to God's grace, and resistance to the motion of God's Spirit, either convincing the world of sin, or persuading to obedience. And this people did always so, as St Stephen testifies of them, Acts vii. 51, and the apostle, Rom.

x. 21, 'To Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands (πρὸς λαὸν ἀπειθοῦντα καὶ ἀντιλέγοντα) unto the disobedient (or unpersuadable) and a gainsaying people.' So the translation of the Septuagint, whom St Paul followed, did with several words express that which in the Hebrew text, Isa. lxv. 2, is delivered in one, 'A *rebellious* people.' But thus much of the sixth contestation.

VII. THE SEVENTH CONTESTATION.

Seventhly, He contests with them for their sacrilege, vers. 8–12; both,

1. Arguing against their sin, ver. 8; and,

2. Expostulating with them, that it were better for them, yea, even in their outward estates, to deal righteously with God, ver. 9–12.

1. He argues against their sin, ver. 8.

(1.) From a ground of equity.

(2.) By an application of their fact unto the ground.

(1.) He argues from a general ground of right and equity, 'Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me.' Will frail weak man (*Adam*) do violence unto, or defraud (*Elohim*), the great and mighty God? Yet you have done so.

*Rob.* The French, 'pillage;' Geneva, 'spoil:' will a man spoil God? So also Pagninus and Vatablus 'crucify, wound, or pierce;' so the Vulgar and the Tigurine; and that is indeed the first signification of the original word. So the translator of the New Testament into the Syriac useth the word: Col. ii. 14, וקבעה, 'And nailed (or pierced) it into his cross.' But by a metaphor, it signifies *to oppress*, or *to rob*, or *to spoil*, as Prov. xxii. 53. The LXX here, taking קבע by a metathesis for קעב, which is to *supplant* or *deceive*, read, 'Will a man supplant his God?' But in the sense there is an agreement. Will a man, or is it fit that a man should grieve, defraud, pierce, or spoil his God, as you do, who rob his priests and ministers of their maintenance, whereby you undermine and overthrow even religion itself, and God's worship? When the portions of the Levites were not given them, the Levites and singers that did the work of God's house fled every one to his field; and so God's work, that is, his worship, was left undone, as Nehemiah observed, Neh. xiii. 10. The truth is, when the ministers of God are kept under the burden of poverty, the Lord's work is either not done, or done deceitfully; when the priests are forced to comply with their humours, from whom they expect their maintenance, and so serve not God, but them; flattering them that feed them, as it is Micah. iii. 5, 'They bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace,' which I interpret according to the Chaldee paraphrase, he that maketh them a feast of flesh, to him they preach peace; 'but he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against them, and so they make the people to err.' And it cannot be otherwise, whiles, as it is in the eleventh verse of that chapter, 'the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money;' that is, are fain to maintain themselves with sordid and unworthy flatteries. To prevent which, it was a most pious and commendable care in King Hezekiah, which is recorded, 2 Chron. xxxi. 4, 'He commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem, to give the portion of the priests and Levites' (that they might attend upon the law of the Lord, so the Vulgate; 'That they might confirm themselves in executing the law of the Lord,' so Tremellius; but as we read), 'that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord.' Dependency and expectation of arbitrary maintenance is a great allay to the purer temper, and spirit, and zeal, that ought to be in them that serve at the Lord's altar; in whom (according to the usual apophthegm of a reverend divine of ours) innocency and independency breeds the best courage; and by such is God best served. The scandals that are given by ministers do much diminish the reputation of religion, and undermine it; but scandalous livings are a great cause of scandalous ministers, which was the observation of a learned gentleman, and worthy member of the House of Commons, in the Parliament *anno* 1628, who also promised that he would never give over soliciting the cure and remedy of this, while parliaments and he should live together. And well may he or some other effectually pursue it, especially having so much encouragment in it, by the piety and tenderness of our present religious and most gracious sovereign, who (according to the example of his royal father, for planting a settled competency for the churches throughout Scotland) hath shewed so much readiness and gracious disposition this way, that (as he deserves it) I doubt not but such as shall deliver his reign hereafter to posterity will, among his other virtues, give him this title, the patron and father of his poor and injured clergy; and will mention that great counsellor of his in ecclesiastical matters, with his due honour, for promoving it in him with so much zeal to the welfare of this church. But of this *obitèr* and *currente calamo*.

(2.) He argues against their sin, by an application of their fact unto that ground of general right. 'Yet ye have robbed me; but ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and in offerings.' They deny the assumption, and he proves it, that they robbed him, because they dealt deceitfully about the portion of his priests, the tithes he had of old assigned unto them. There were three sorts of tithes: The first were given to the Levites for their alimony; this was called *maaser rishon*, the first tithe. The second was that which every man set apart against his going up to Jerusalem to feast with the Levites and priests; this was called *maaser sheni*, the second tithe. And lest that should be omitted, the tithe of the third year was to be given to the poor, to Levites, to widows and orphans, and this was called *maaser shlishi*, the third tithe, and *maaser aani*, the poor man's tithe, πτωχοδέκαδαι. See these three sorts mentioned, Tobit i. 7, 8; and besides, and before all these, the fiftieth part was given

to the priests, which was called *reschit*, the first fruit, and *terumah gdola*, the great offering. Tithes were intended much unto the same use in the Christian church; one part for the bishop, another for the clergy, a third for the poor, a fourth for the repair of the church, according to Walafrid. Strabo, *de exord. Eccles.* cap. 27, published by John Cochlæus *in Speculo Antiq. Devot.* The distribution is somewhat otherwise in the *excerptions* of Egbert, archbishop of York, which the learned Sir H. Spelman, in his late diligent collections of our British councils and decrees, hath communicated, *ad annum Christi*, 750, the fifth excerption. Let the priests receive the tithes, and set out the first part for the adorning of the church; the second for the use of poor and strangers; the third part let the priests reserve to themselves. The very same order we find in the canons of Alfrick (bishop of York, as Sir H. Spelman guesseth at it, *an.* 1052) *can.* 24. He that would see more concerning the care of our ancient kings about tithes, may satisfy himself in that industrious and learned author, *in Concil. Calchuth, ad an.* 787, where in the seventeenth canon, *et Decimæ justè solvantur*, this very place of our prophet Malachi is alleged, as it is also in the *Constitutions* of Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, *an.* 943, *cap* 10. He may see also King Offa's gift, *an.* 793, p. 308; King Ethelwulph's gift in the council at Winchester, *an.* 855, p. 348; King Alured's, *Eccles. laws*, cap. ix. p. 377; King Edward's the elder, cap. vi. p. 392; King Æthelstan's, cap. i. p. 402; King Edmund's, cap. ii. p. 420; King Edgar's, cap. iii. p. 444, and the canons of his time, *can.* liv. p. 454. Tithes, they are God's portion; hence when the Jews tithed their flocks, as the young passed through the door of the fold, the Levite stood with a rod in his hand, and marking the tenth that came out, said, 'This tenth is the Lord's,' according to that Lev. xxvii. 32, 'Whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be the Lord's.' And so they have ever been accounted, although the church have sometimes taken liberty to assign them to other uses; as those *Decimæ Saladinides*, which the council of Paris granted to Philip of France for his war against Saladin the Mahomedan, *an.* 1189, which (as Matthew Paris, monk of St Albans, writeth) Richard I., the king of England, obtained also for the same purpose the next year, and others since, though the pretence were altered. But see the liberty of the ancienter church concerning tithes, in Gratian, *Caus.* i. *qu.* 3, *pervenit ad. caus.* xiii. *qu.* 1, 2, *caus.* xvi. *qu.* 1; *Si quis Laicus*, and *Ecclesiæ antiquitus*, and *in canonibus in Gangrensi*, and *quæst.* 7, *Decimas quas.* And for ours, for the times he writ of, and collected, see Wilhelm. Lyndewood, *Constitut.* lib. i. p. 13 z., p. 14 f, p. 15 o, &c., and largely, *de Decimis*, lib. iii. p. 101, &c. Concerning the question, *quo jure*, besides the skirmishes of our men about it, and which you shall find in the reverend and godly author of the following commentary, pertinent and full, I do refer to Bellarmine, *tom* 2, *de Clericis*, lib. i. cap. 25. Against whom in that place, Guillaume Amesius says nothing, and John Alstedus, in his *Supplement of a fifth Tome* to Daniel Chamierus, *panstrat.* lib. iv. cap. 10, *par.* 2, confesses in a manner, that to object against him in this, is to seek a knot in a bulrush. See Dr Thomas Ridley his learned discourse of Tithes, in his *View of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Law*, p. 124, &c.

*And in offerings.* *Terumah*, the oblation, elevation, offering, or first fruit, did also belong to God; the *Terumah gdolah*, the great oblation, and the *Bikkurim.* The several sorts, and other matters worth knowing, concerning as well tithes as these oblations, see in John Weemse, *Christian synag.*, lib. i. cap. 6, *sect.* 4 *par.* 2, 3; and more fully in our own Goodwin, *Mos.* and *Aar.* lib. 6, cap. 2, 3. And thus having argued against their sin,

2. He expostulates with them their unreasonableness in this thing, and that it were better for them to deal righteously in the maintenance of God's priests, both

(1.) For the avoiding of evil, ver. 9, and

(2.) For the procuring of good, vers.10–12.

(1.) In defrauding God of tithes, they brought themselves under the curse: 'Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.' Not one, or few, but all dealt ill with God in the matter of tithes; and therefore God brought a curse upon the whole nation. The Vulgate and others take it for a curse of penury and scarcity of victuals; a great curse in that land. *Meerah*, of *Arar*, signifies penury, want, or barrenness. Winkleman derives the word of *maar*, to *gnaw* or *pill*; but not so soundly. The LXX here take the word to come of ראה, and upon that mistake render the place, καὶ ἀποβλέποντες ὑμεῖς ἀποβλέπετε. (Of the anomaly in the word נארים in the text, see Sixtin. Amama, in *Anom. Spec. ad locum.*)

(2.) In bringing of tithes justly, they should find,

[1.] Their estates blessed, vers. 10, 11.

[2.] Their reputation cleared, ver. 12. So there are here two promises.

[1.] First, a blessing on their estates: ver. 10, 11, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open unto you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.' A place often and pertinently applied and pressed, by such as have had occasion to declaim on this subject, and surely of great force to such as have faith in the promises of God. A place which had well deserved more than a bare marginal note, from the late author of the profitable *Treatise of Divine Promises*, lib. iii. p. 231.

*Bring ye all the tithes.* Our old authorised English,

'Bring ye every tithe.' Men have made distinctions of tithes (and some of their own coining, to save something from God); but rank them under what heads you will, all must be brought, and of every kind.

*Into the storehouse.* Vulgate, 'into the barn.' The tithe-barn. So the word is, Joel i. 17, 'The garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down.' But it is usually rendered 'treasury,' *beth-haozar*, 'the house of treasure or store.' It seems they had a 'standing-place' for tithes as it is called, Neh. xiii. 11–13, see the place, and 1 Chron. xxvi. 20.

*That there may be meat in my house.* Vulgate, 'that there may be spoil,' and the Hebrew *tereph* signifies so much. It is a synecdoche, and the affection of trope is a catachresis. 'Spoil,' that is, 'meat,' there is the catachresis, the spoil which the beast makes to get food being put for meat; and then the synecdoche, meat, put for all necessary provision.

*Meat in my house.* That is, in the storehouse for the use and necessity of my house; that is, of my priests and Levites that serve in my house, my temple.

*And prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts.* Manasseh Ben-Israel, *Quæst.* 3 *in Deut.*, makes the doubt how these words may be reconciled to those in Deut. vi. 16, 'Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God,' and answers well, that Malachi's words are not to be understood *causaliter*, but *consecutivè*, namely, that they should indeed find by experience, that if they offered their tithes, they should find the Lord gracious and bountiful. See him more fully in the place cited, in his *Conciliator*. So that here the promise of good things follows. In which, let us observe the artifice used in persuading.

*Prove me, &c., if I will not open you the windows of heaven.* 'Whether I will not.' Piscator and our commentary make this form, 'if I will not,' an oath. Which cannot be clear without some supply to the text to make up the sense, which needs not, but the sense doth facilely offer itself thus, I will open them unto you, and pour you out so much rain (a great blessing in those hot and dry countries), as if the windows of heaven were opened. A phrase noting great plenty, 2 Kings vii. 2.

*The windows of heaven.* Vulgate, 'The cataracts of heaven.' Cataracts are gushings down of much water with violence, of καταῤῥάττειν, *defluere*, such as those outrageous streams of fresh water (which Peter Martyr of Milan, a councillor to the king of Spain, describes in his *Decades of the New World*, Dec. 1, lib. vi.) which so violently issue and fall headlong into the sea, that they drive back the salt water a good way, though rough and forced with contrary winds. They rush down from the tops of the mountains of Paria, which Christopher Columbus, the first discoverer, was strongly conceited of to be the seat of paradise. The French translate it here, 'the shuts.' Menochius expresseth the Vulgar 'cataracts' by the 'portcullises,' the sluices or dams of heaven. And so Cæl. Rhodiginus, *Lect. Antiquæ.*, lib. xxiii. cap. 24, doth express it, taking occasion to interpret that place in Gen. vii. 11. Upon which place, and Gen. viii. 2, see John Piscator's *Scholia*. The clouds are the windows or flood-gates of heaven, in the sense of this place.

*And pour you out*, or, *empty you out, a blessing;* that is, a shower of rain, bringing a blessing with it of plenty. Among the Hebrews, a blessing, as when it is used concerning words, it signifies a salutation or good wish; so when it is used concerning things, it denotes some real good or gift, as Gen. xxxiii. 11, 'Take, I pray thee (ברכתי) my blessing, which is brought unto thee,' that is, my gift. So Judges i. 15, 'Give me a blessing.' The Chaldee reads, 'a possession;' and that appears to be her meaning by the next words, 'Give also springs of water.' She desired some low grounds. And we also in our use of speaking have such a meaning, when we speak of a mother's blessing.

*That* (there shall) *not* (be room) *enough* (to receive it). The Hebrew, being concise, hath only, *that not enough*. The rest our English translation hath supplied. The Geneva, 'I will pour you out a blessing without measure.' The Vulgate, 'A blessing even to abundance.' The LXX, 'Till it sufficeth.' The Chaldee, 'So that ye shall say, It is enough.' The French, 'As much as you can have no more.' The sense of all this variety of expression is the same and clear. Your storehouses, rooms, and vessels, shall not be able to hold and contain the plenty; like as the prophet dealt with the widow, whose history we have, 2 Kings iv. 3–6.

*And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake*; that is, the locusts or other harmful worms or creatures. When there is much rain and plenty, many times insects eat up all, as we see Joel i. 4, and in the history of the plagues of Egypt. It is among the most wonderful stories and most lamentable which the historians do relate of the plague of locusts in France, about the year 852. Wheresoever they fell, they pitched their camp as it were, and devoured all for twenty miles' space in a day. And still a small company went about a day's journey before the rest, as harbingers and guides of the rest, to choose where the whole multitude should alight, which accordingly would follow, and devour all before them.

Some countries have been almost laid waste by them. Pliny saith that in the isle Lemnos, the magistrates were fain to take it into their care, to appoint unto every inhabitant what measure of them to destroy, so to keep them under. Yea, Scaliger, *Exer.* cxcii. sect. 3, tells us of a kind of insects that usually in the northern parts of Norway fall in showers of rain, which if they be opened as soon as they fall, have raw and indigested herbs within them; and when and where they alight, they bite and eat up all that is green. Against these devourers the Lord promises to provide and to secure them.

*And he shall not destroy*, or *corrupt, the fruit of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field.* Vulgate, Geneva, and the French, 'your vine shall not be barren;' or, 'abortive,' so others. The buds and grapes shall not fall off unripe. They are called *orbi palmites* among the Latins, that bear not. The word is used Gen. xxxi. 38, 'Thy she-goats have not cast their young.' And Gen. xlii. 36, 'Me have ye bereaved of my children,' שכלתם.

[2.] Secondly, A blessing of reputation or good name: ver. 12, *And all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.* All shall speak of your blessedness, shall magnify and praise you. So the sense is in Job xxix. 11, 'When the ear heard me, it blessed me;' that is, it praised me. And thus the LXX, μακαριοῦσιν.

*For ye shall be a delightsome land.* Vulgate, 'a desirable;' Geneva, 'a pleasant land.' Your land shall be green and flourishing, so Cyril. You shall inherit a fertile land, so Vatablus; I rather take it as St Jerome. All nations shall desire to live in your land; a fruit of that reputation they should have if they honoured God with their substance. And to this sense the LXX, and our following commentary. Ye shall be as a pleasant land, praised and commended by all that pass by you. Thus much of the seventh contestation.

VIII. THE EIGHTH AND LAST CONTESTATION.

Lastly, He contests with them for their blaspheming of God's providence, for their atheism, and stubborn perverse contempt of God's worship, and of repentance, ver. 13 to the end of the prophecy. We have,

1. Their blasphemous atheism proposed, ver. 13–15.
2. Answered, ver. 16, &c., *ad fin.*

1. Their blasphemous atheism is proposed and set down.

(1.) In general, ver. 13.
(2.) In particular, ver. 14, 15.

(1.) First, In general: ver. 13, 'Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord; yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?' They thought and spake proudly of and against God.

*Your words have been stout.* LXX, 'troublesome;' Vulgate, 'they have prevailed over me,' against me; *Chazku*, your words are strong, confirmed, or, as the French hath it, 'enforced against me.' You persist stoutly and clamorously in your blasphemy, so Lyranus; your words are troublesome, and press me as a load-stone, so St Jerome, Remigius, &c. Your words overcome me and mine, you pervert more than my prophets can prevail with to the contrary by your saying, It is in vain to serve the Lord, &c., so the Tigurine.

*Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?* They deny the accusation. The Geneva, 'What have we spoken against thee?' But there is more in the word. נדברנו in *Niphal* signifies a continual speech, as our translators have well expressed, What have we spoken so much against thee? And so the Targum or Chaldee paraphrase, 'In what have we multiplied speech against thee?'

(2.) Secondly, In particular: ver. 14, 15, 'Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.' This is the proof of the accusation against them. These were their stout words against God.

*Ye have said, It is vain to serve God.* Vulgate, 'He is vain who serveth God.' There is nothing got by it. A profane atheistical conceit, now-a-days also entertained of many.

*And what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance*, or *his observation*, saith our margin. The Geneva, 'his commandment.' The Hebrew is, *shamarnu mishmartô*, that we kept his custody or his ward; that is, the office imposed by him upon us. So Isa. xxi. 8, 'I am set (*mishmarti*) in my ward whole nights;' 1 Chron. ix. 23, 'They had oversight by wards' (*mishmaroth*). The priests were divided in twenty-four *mishmaroth*, custodies, or wards, which they entered upon by their turns every Sabbath. To which here seems to be an allusion.

*And that we have walked mournfully* (or *in black*) *before the Lord.* Pagninus and the Geneva, 'that we have walked humbly;' the LXX, 'suppliant;' the Chaldee, 'with a spirit cast down;' Piscator, 'mournfully before,' that is, 'for fear of Jehovah, that we might reconcile him unto us'; the French, 'that we have walked in poor estate.' The word is קדרנית, *obscurely, in mourning, or in black.* We have the word 1 Kings xviii. 45, 'The heavens (*Hithkaddern*) were black with clouds.' And Ps. xxxv. 14 (*Koder*), 'I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.' Black is the colour of mourning. Our commentary gives this sense, What profit have we that we have walked humbly; that is, that we have not resisted nor revenged ourselves, but referred all to God; what have we got by it?

*Now, then* (or *therefore*), *we call the proud happy.* They who tread upon honest men, and raise themselves high, and work their own ends confidently and daringly, they thrive, and therefore them we call, that is, count happy. Jerome here calls them arrogant men. Boiling, raging men, swelling and presumptuous. *Zedim* comes of a root that hath all these significations.

*Yea, they that work wickedness are set up*, or built up; that is, they have children, houses, lands, and honours, &c. Chaldee, 'they are established;' the LXX, ἀνοικοδομοῦνται, 'are re-edified.' They prosper, and have all things well about them. As the word is, Job xxii. 23, 'If thou return to the Almighty (תבנה) thou shalt be built up;' that is, thou shalt prosper.

*Yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.* The grudging and blasphemous speeches of these wicked men are still continued; those that continue in sinning,

and add sin to sin, and, as it were, dare God to try what he will do, or how he will deal, yet they are delivered; we see them to be safe, secure, bold, and prosperous. See Ps. xcv. 9.

2. This blasphemy of theirs thus discovered is answered,

*First*, By opposing the contrary discourse of the godly, ver. 16.

*Secondly*, By shewing God's taking notice of both, ver. 16, latter part.

*Thirdly*, By declaring God's gracious promise to deal well with the godly, ver. 17.

*Fourthly*, By warning the blasphemers that God's dealings shall be manifest, even in their eyes, ver. 18.

*Fifthly*, By a further amplification of that point of God's manifest dealing, chap. iv. ver. 1, *ad fin.*

*First*, Their atheism and blasphemy is answered by opposing to these blasphemous conceits and words of wicked men, the contrary opinion and discourse of the godly: ver. 16, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.' In the greatest apparent ataxy and disorder, and in the time of the stoutest language and behaviour of ungodly men, they that feared the Lord, being acquainted with his ways and manner of working, spake often for their mutual encouragement, and otherwise to one another, that there would come a day, or that God is righteous, or that he only defers, or such like things they spake, whereby they defended the cause of God against wicked atheists. This I conceive to be the sense of these words, but for the manner of the prophet's bringing them into his discourse interpreters have not satisfied me. I conceive him in the midst of his discourse, wherein, in the person of God, he bends and directs his speech all this while to them that were before him, the wicked whom he laboured to convince. Now he breaks off, and turns his speech to God, or to his own soul, or to the godly, yet with an intention in a fine and insinuating way to instruct the wicked blasphemers that heard him. In this manner your words have been stout; ye have said, It is in vain to serve God, that men thrive most by wicked courses; but, O my God, thou knowest; or, O thou my soul, thou knowest; or, O ye that fear God, ye know, whatever these blind and profane men use to think and say, yet then in the greatest seeming disorders, yet then they that feared God have other conceits, and encourage one another, and speak otherwise; and thou, O God, takest notice of them; or, O my soul, thou knowest; or, O ye that fear God, ye know that the Lord hearkens and hears, and sets down all in his book, &c. But this conceit upon the place I do, with all submission, leave to the judgment of those that can more clearly and with more facility, give satisfaction to themselves about the coherence of these words.

*Secondly*, He answers their blasphemy by shewing God's taking notice of the different speeches and carriages of men: ver. 16, the latter part of it, 'Then the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought on his name.' I take not these to be the words of the godly, as Tremellius, Tarnovius, and generally all, understands them, by supplying the text with the word '*saying:*' 'They that feared the Lord spake to each other, *saying*, The Lord hearkened,' &c. But I conceive, as I said in the former member of the verse, that they are the words of the prophet, who answers their blasphemy by telling them (in that way of rhetoric that I have expressed above) that God is not so regardless as they imagine and speak; but he hears both their atheism, and likewise what defence the godly do make, and puts it down as it were for a remembrance, to reward it in them. I herein follow St Jerome, and desire leave to depart from the reverend author of our commentary, who interprets them as the speeches of the people, according to the supply in the Tremellian Bible.

*And a book of remembrance was written before him for them*, &c. It is a metaphor from the use of kings to set down the good services done unto them; as we have an instance of that custom, Esther vi. 1, wherein Mordecai's service was remembered; and Corn. à Lapide tells us, that the pope hath a book of the merits of his prelates, whom he promotes accordingly. The prophet speaks *anthropologicè*, not that God needs any memorial, but because men do keep such books; and the Lord will as surely remember to reward his, as if they were written in a register, *Sepher Ziccaron*. The LXX, βιβλίον μνημοσύνων, 'a book of memorials,' a chronicle, an history. As God hath a bottle for his people's tears, so he hath a chronicle for their sufferings.

*Thirdly*, He answers their blasphemy by declaring God's gracious promises of dealing well with the godly, and such as fear him: ver. 17, 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare him as a man spareth his son that serveth him;' a text of most sweet and comfortable contents. But for the choice and practical notions which it doth afford for the encouraging and supporting of the soul, I do refer to a discourse upon this verse by that excellent preacher, my reverend and worthy friend, Dr Richard Sibbes, now with God.

*They shall be mine.* Vulgate and Geneva, 'They shall be to me.' *In that day when I make up my jewels.*' Vulgate, 'They shall be to me in the day in which I do' (that is, do judgment, as they that follow the Vulgar make good the sense as well as they can) 'for peculiar.' The Geneva, 'They shall be to me in that day that I shall do this for a flock.' The old authorised English Bible, 'They shall be to me in the day that I shall do judgment, a flock.' And *peculium*, the word of the Vulgar Latin, sometimes signifies a flock; as in Plautus, *Asinar:*

> Quanquam ego sum sordidatus,
> Frugi tamen sum, nec potest peculium numerari.

But properly it is that part of the flock which the

fathers granted their children, or the masters to their servants, as a stock whereon to exercise their industry. According to Hottoman, a stock of cattle peculiar; and so it somewhat agrees with the Hebrew, *segulla*, a select portion. So Deut. vi. 6, 'The Lord hath chosen thee to be (*segulla*) a special people unto himself.' But it is properly some rare or dear treasure, a brooch or rich tablet, or pendant, a jewel, a rich and peculiar treasure; as Eccles. ii. 8, 'I gathered me (*segullath melachim*) the peculiar treasure of kings;' Exod. xix. 5, 'Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people;' LXX, λαὸς περιούσιος, 'a peculiar people.' The Lord promiseth to take such care of the godly, and to lay them up so safely as one would a special jewel.

*And I will spare him as a man spareth his son* (the Geneva, *his own son*) *that serveth him.* I will be indulgent towards and have pity upon the godly; I will deal tenderly, pardon, and remit their punishment; see 2 Sam. xxi. 7, David spared Mephibosheth; or I will have compassion. So the word is ordinarily translated; as 1 Sam. xxiii. 21, חמלתם, 'Ye have compassion on me.'

*Fourthly*, He answers their blasphemy by warning them that God's dealings and judgments shall be so manifest even in their own sight, that they shall be clearly discerned from the godly: ver. 18, 'Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.' You, O wicked blasphemers, shall change your opinion; and whereas you said the wicked prosper, and it is in vain to serve the Lord, ye shall see a great difference between them, and how much they gain by it that serve the Lord; so St Jerome, &c. See the point wholesomely and profitably handled, in a treatise of Dr Preston's on Eccles. ix. 1–4, annexed to his treatise of *The new covenant.*

*Fifthly*, and lastly, He answers by a further amplification of that which was proposed before, to shew God's different dealing with the righteous and the wicked. By an *hysterosis*, the righteous were first named in the proposition, ver. 18; but the wicked are first treated of in this amplification, chapter iv.; as the Hebrew Bibles that we now use, and the Latin, and our English, and most others do distinguish it, which yet Tremellius, and Piscator, and some others do continue to the former chapter, making but three chapters of this prophecy, and so the first verse of this chapter to be the nineteenth verse of the third, and so on.

Where let me take occasion by the way to note it, that all antiquity was ignorant of the division of the Bible that we now use, which was made about the year 1250. The work (as Genebrard thinks) of those schoolmen who assisted Hugh the cardinal in gathering the concordances, and an invention so useful and so much approved, that the Jews themselves after followed it in the Hebrew Bibles. The ancients, indeed, had their titles, and chapters or versicles too; but not so as we divide them, but usually in shorter periods; as appears by that of Cæsarius, We have (saith he) four Gospels, which consist of one thousand one hundred sixty-two chapters. And Euthymius, quoting Mat. xxvi. 58, calls it the sixty-fifth title; and quoting Mat. xxvi. 74, calls it the sixty-sixth title. Their titles were as our chapters, and their chapters much what as our verses. For instance, St Matthew, which we divide into twenty-eight chapters, they divided into sixty-eight titles, and three hundred and fifty-five chapters. But all distinguished not alike. As the Jews had their *Parschiot*, as namely, *Bereschit*, *Noah*, &c. according to which they cited the scripture of the Old Testament. So the fathers; some of them divide books according to the histories, as Cyrus Prodromus makes his first title, *In the beginning was the word;* his second title, *There was a marriage in Cana;* his third title, *Christ's night disciple, Nicodemus*, &c. Some divided them according to the miracles, as Gregory; one title, *Of the marriage in Cana;* another, *Of the five loaves*, &c. Cyril, as he wrote twelve books upon John, so he divides the evangel; the first begins at John i. 1; the second at John i. 29; the third at John v. 35, &c. St Augustine makes a *period* in every *tract*, and St Chrysostom in every homily. St Jerome, on these small prophets, oft begins a book in the middle of a chapter, as we have them now divided. In Œcumenius his *Enarrations* he hath forty, where we make twenty-eight chapters, on the Acts; he hath twenty, where we make but sixteen in the epistle to the Romans, &c. Many of them, indeed, oft end their paraphrases and discourses where our chapter end; but that is because the matter in hand breaks off there. The truth is, distinguishing of the Bible into chapters and verses, much helps the reader; but it is so divided as sometimes obscures the sense, as we oft find in reading the Bible, and of which the learned Isaac Casaubon complained. In many places those things are now divided, which were better to be read together; for example, Mat. xx. is ill divided; for the first sixteen verses do manifestly agree with the former chapter. So this fourth chapter of Malachi were haply better to be continued to the former. Yet I will not presume to alter in these notes what our own Bibles direct me unto, though I consent to the judgment of those great men, I mean Casaubon and Heinsius, that we are not superstitiously to adhere to our late division. Casaubon wished that some great divine would take the pains to restore the ancient division, and Heinsius, *prolegom. ad Exercit.* p. 20, though he take no notice there of Casaubon's desire, wishes too that it were done exactly, and promises to do it; which surely will be of great use, for much depends upon a right division, else the sense may be much darkened. But of this enough, and too much by way of digression, unless the nature of *Essay* or

*Exercitation* (which this poor labour of mine is) will bear it out and allow it. But I return to the text, wherein the different dealing of God with the wicked and the godly is set out by evident comparisons. For,

1. To the wicked, the day of the Lord shall be terrible: ver. 1, 'For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.' The word *for* shews the inference of this upon the proposition in the former verse, Ye shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, *for* the day comes that will be terrible to the wicked, as to the godly it shall be comfortable. This coherence St Jerome and the ancient expositors allow. The coming of Christ, which is prophesied of, even his first coming, in regard of the issue of it, and upon men's unthankfulness and unbelief and refusing of mercy, shall be terrible. So it is also described to be, Mat. iii. 12, John ix. 39. Christ, who is εἰς ἀνάστασιν, 'for the rising again of many in Israel,' is also εἰς πτῶσιν, 'for the fall of many,' that is, of ungodly and unbelievers, Luke ii. 34.

*The day cometh that shall burn as an oven;* that is, the day shall be when wicked men shall be burned; as we use to say the grand assizes will hang many, and make a gaol delivery; that is, the judges at their assizes. Now, whether this burning signify only Christ the judge's wrath, as Jerome and Remigius, or, properly and ultimately, that fire which shall burn the world, and afterward in hell, as Lyranus, Vatablus, &c., to me is not material; for though I understand, with Montanus, the whole course of the prophecy contained in this period, and that of it which is of most difficulty, ver. 5, to be meant of Christ's first coming, yet the execution also of Christ's wrath upon unbelievers in the very day of judgment may be looked at, without any prejudice to the safe and unwarrantable interpretation of these things, as Christ himself applies them, Mat. xi. 14, and xvii. 10–12, to his first coming, as we shall see when we come to the fifth verse; and therefore I interpret it, without any respect, only in this general sense, as a prophecy of God's judgments against the wicked, who will not receive Christ when God shall send him for the restoration of the church.

*And all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.* Though in this life they be iron and brass, stout and proud against God, yet they shall be weak and unable to make resistance against him. See Isa. xlvii. 14, 'They shall be as stubble (Chaldee, *hhallashim chekash*, 'weak as stubble,') they shall not deliver themselves from the flame.' As little straws and small sticks, stubble, that by reason of its lightness may be driven with the wind, Jer. xiii. 24.

*And the day, &c., shall burn them up, &c.; it shall leave them neither root nor branch.* It is an amplification, to shew the full and utter destruction of the wicked, as, when the root is stocked up, the tree can grow no more, which, I say, may not unsafely be understood of the day of judgment upon Christ's coming the second time, though Winkleman, Osiander, and some others do think the place fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities that came upon the unbelieving Jews upon their refusal of Christ in his first coming, which is also a probable exposition.

2. To the godly the day of the Lord shall be full of comfort and an happy day: ver. 2, 3, 'But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.'

*But unto you.* That adversative form shews the opposition of these to them that were mentioned before, and the manifest difference of God's dealing.

*Shall the sun* (our old English Bible, *that* sun) *of righteousness arise.* In his first coming (according to Theodoret and Montanus), Christ arose a Sun of righteousness. He came forth as the sun doth, as a bridegroom out of his chamber, in his nativity, and as a giant to run his course, in the course of all his conflicts and sufferings; he went under a cloud in his passion, and brake forth in his resurrection, and darts forth beams of righteousness; for he came to justify the world, to enlighten, to enliven all believers. And in his second coming also (according to Jerome and others), he will be full of majesty and brightness; he will declare hid things, the secrets of all hearts, and, after a long time of gloomy weather, will break out to the cheering and refreshing of his saints, to the driving away of all darkness, sin, and error, to make ever after a continual daylight, and to astonish and dazzle the eyes of his enemies. As I said, I see not but Malachi might respect all this, and prophesy of Christ's whole administration from his nativity till his rendering of the kingdom to his Father.

*The sun.* Christ is called שמש, *Schemesch*, the *minister* of God; the *Sun*, which ministers and imparts light and heat; for the word is of *Schamasch*, to serve or minister to God or men, according as the Syriac version of the New Testament useth this word, Mat. xx. 28, 'The Son of Man came not (Syr. *deneschtammasch*, διακονηθῆναι), that he might be ministered unto, but (*daneschemmesch*, διακονῆσαι) that he might minister.' So Christ is the Sun of righteousness, because he doth benignly impart righteousness or goodness; for I explicate one word by another, as it is Ps. xxiv. 5, 'He shall receive the blessing and righteousness (that is, goodness) from the God of his salvation;' and Ps. ciii. 17, where, for *righteousness*, the LXX have ἐλεημοσύνην. See our last translation in the margin, at Joel ii. 23. In the prophet, Zech. iii. 8, where Christ is called *the Branch*, the LXX read ἀνατολή; and Junius (*Paral.* lib. i. par. 50) parallels this place of Malachi with Luke i. 78, where Christ is

called ἀνατολὴ ἐξ ὕψους, 'The day-spring from on high.' So ours: The orient, or east, Mat. ii. 2, and Mat. xxiv. 27. But ἀνατολή, the east, or rising, is, by a metonymy of the adjunct, put for the sun in that place; the east from on high, that is, saith George Pasor (*Lex. in Nov. Test, ad Thema*, τέλλω); ὁ ἥλιος μεσεμβριάζων, *the noon-tide sun*; or ὁ ἀνατέλλων ἥλιος, *the sun itself rising*, as Dan. Heinsius (*Exercit*, lib. iii. cap. 1, *ad Luc.* i. 68.) Of this glorious sun, Samson was the type; as in other things, so in his name, whether it signify *their Sun*, as St Jerome interprets it, and as it is interpreted in the rhyme or church prose:—*

> Samson dictus, Sol eorum;
> Christus lux est electorum,
> Quos illustrat gratia.
>
> Samson *their Sun* did hight,
> Christ to th' elect is light,
> On whom he shines with grace.

or whether it signify a *Little Sun*, as seemed rather to Mercerus and to Bonfrerius. And truly, Samson, though he warmed and cheered the hearts of men in that dark time of idolatry and hard time of affliction and oppression, especially in his noon of full strength, yet he was but a little sun in respect of him whom he did type, who is the Sun of righteousness, full of glorious beams, able to dazzle the beholders with his brightness, so exceeding great that God thought fit to inure the people's eyes by looking first on a lesser light, John the Baptist, that shining light, which came before Christ arose. This point the reader may find not inelegantly expressed (if he think it worth his pains to look into such forgotten books), in the *Order of the Breviary* or the *Ordinarium Divin. Offic. Secundum usum Sarum*, in the fifth lection appointed for the Feast of John the Baptist, which is folio xlix. And I the rather note it, because the response and versicle appointed together with this lection are the words of the angel to Zacharias concerning John, Luke i. 17, whereby we may guess that the Church of Rome also interpreted the two last verses of this chapter (to which that in St Luke refers) concerning John. And so I have prepared a little light for those verses before I come unto them.

*The Sun*, &c., *with healing in his wings*. The Geneva, 'And health shall be under his wings.' As health or healing is said to be in the sun's beams, because by them it warms and cherisheth all things, dries up cold moistures offensive to the creatures, excites and quickens plants, beasts, and men in the springtime, and revives all that which seemed well-nigh dead in the winter, so doth Christ bring life into the world, and came and preached life; therefore the Syriac and Arabic translate it 'health upon his tongue.' But in the text it is, 'in his wings,' as Christ is compared to the sun, and the beams of the sun are called wings, partly because of its swift dissparkling of them in motion, and partly because it spreads its light in its risings, as wings; whence Homer calls the sun χρυσοκόμος, the yellow-haired or golden-haired sun; and the Scripture so speaks, Joel ii. 2, 'The morning spread upon the mountains;' and Ps. cxxxix. 9, 'If I take the wings of the morning.' Thus in regard of spreading, Virgil, *Æneid*, viii., speaks of the night also,—

> Nox ruit, et fuscis tellurem amplectitur alis.

So Christ, in regard of his imparting of himself, and of health and virtue from him, is said to have wings; Cornelius à Lapide would have it to point at a further mystery, that as Christ is a sun, so he is the true bird of the sun, as it is called, the true phœnix, for thus he saith the metaphor of having wings doth best befit him. Let me note thus much to further his conceit, that *canaph*, a *wing*, is of *canaph*, to *gather* and cherish, as a brood-hen doth her young; so Christ useth it, Mat. xxiii. 37; and David alludeth to it, Ps. xvii. 8, 'Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.' But of the phœnix, see Pliny's *Hist. Natur.* lib. x. cap. 2, who speaks doubtfully; others, as Jonston, *Thaumatogr. Nat.*, cl. vi. cap. 27, confidently of it, that it is a fable; yet Maiola, *Dier. Canic.*, tom. i. *Titul. Aves.*, disputes largely that all is true which is reported of it. And John Alsted, *Theolog. Natur.*, part i. p. 217, and part ii. p. 474, seems to me to believe it, and so it seems Tertullian and Vatablus did, who think they have Scripture for it; for so that place in Job xxix. 18, which in the Vulgate is, 'I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as a palm;' and in our translation, 'I shall multiply my days as the sand;' they turn thus, 'I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as a phœnix.' But Cornelius à Lapide doth not believe so, but takes the story for a fable; and I think he had good reason to do so; yet of the enigmatical use of if, see him, *ad hunc locum*, and in his Proem to the Minor Prophets, p. 23 and 44. How Asterius applies this place, see Dan. Heinsius, *Exercit*, lib. i. cap. 5, and his censure.

*And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.* Such as understand this prophecy of Christ's second coming only, give this sense, Ye shall go out of the prison of this life into the other, so St Jerome, Remigius, Vatablus; or out of the grave, as calves loosed from the stall where they are tied, so Tertullian, *Lib. de Resur.*, chap. xxxi., where he quotes this place. And they make this growing up, or skipping of fat calves, to signify the sanity and vigour of the godly, at and after the resurrection; their agility and great joy together with the heavenly choirs, and their strange and sudden leap (as it were) from mortality. I incline rather to that of our commentary, that it signifies the

* Concerning the signification of this name, see my Lord Primate of Ireland, in his most learned History of the Antiquities of the British Churches, chap. v. p. 84, by occasion of the mentioning of Samson, Bishop of St David's, in Wales.

increase of grace and the Spirit from Christ upon the godly, or their liberty and increasing in the joy of the Spirit, or their spiritual joy here, and perfected in heaven.

*Grow up as calves of the stall.* Vulgate, 'shall leap.' The LXX, σκιρτήσετε, skip and be wanton. Chaldee, 'Ye shall thrive, or grow fat.'. And so the Tigurine, Pagninus, 'Ye shall be multiplied.' פשתם (an anomaly, *Hiric* being put for *Pathach*) is of פוש, and hath all those significations, to *grow*, to *multiply*, to *grow fat*, to *expatiate*, to *be wanton*, to *leap and frisk*.

*As calves of the stall.* Chaldee, Tigurine, Pagninus, the French, the Geneva, 'as fat calves.' The LXX, 'like calves at liberty.' Vulgate, 'as calves out of the herd,' that feed and pasture together among the rest, and grow fat at grass, as it is Jer. l. 11. But *Marbek* is *Sagiuarium*, the place, stable, or as our English hath it, the stall where calves are fatted. Jer. xlvi. 21, 'Her hired men are like bullocks of the stall.' So the Hebrew, and the margin there agreeable to it: 1 Sam. xxviii. 24, 'The woman had a calf of the stall.' Our translators render it according to the Chaldee, 'a fat calf.'

*And ye shall tread down the wicked.* יעסותם of עסס a word used nowhere else in the Bible. The Chaldee, 'you shall thresh.' The LXX, and Tertullian (quoting this, *Lib. de Resur.*), Vulgate, Pagninus, ours, &c., 'you shall tread upon,' or 'tread down the wicked,' that is, you shall be over them. A plain difference then shall be found between you and them, notwithstanding men's profane conceits to the contrary.

*For they shall be ashes under your feet.* Montanus and Geneva, 'dust under the soles of your feet.'

*In the day that I shall do this.* What day that is, see before upon ver. 1.

From this prophecy of the approaching of Christ's coming, he takes occasion, in the name of the Lord,

1. To exhort them to study the law, ver. 4.

2. To prepare their expectation of Christ, by prophesying again of his forerunner, vers. 5, 6.

1. He takes occasion to exhort them (because, as it is very probable, he knew himself to be the last of the prophets, and that they should be destitute of that help any longer), diligently to search and study the law in the mean season, till the coming of Christ, to whom the law in all the parts of it doth lead. Ver. 4, 'Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.' The law here may be taken comprehensively for all the doctrine of Moses, which is divided, Deut. vi. 1, into מצוה, commandments (the moral law), חקים, statutes (the ceremonial law), and משפטים, judgments (the judicial law); or it may be taken principally for the moral, the other two being afterward repeated.

*The law of Moses.* It is usual for writings to carry the names of them that pen them, as David's Psalter. And Moses was the lawgiver to Israel from God. He hath his name from that accident in his infancy: Exod. ii. 10, 'She called his name Moses (משה, Mosche, that is, drawn out); and she said, because (משיתהו) I drew him out of the water.' In ancient time they wrote his name Moyses, either thinking it to be compounded of the Egyptian words, *Mo*, water, and *Hyses*, saved; or, being acquainted with the Syrians' pronunciation, *Muses* (as the Syrians at this day and the Turks do pronounce it, as *Cutlu Muses*, an usual name among them, that is, Happy Moses), and joining ours with it, of *Moses* and *Muses*, made *Moyses*, but corruptly. Thus Drusius, *in quæst. Hebr.* Among the Egyptians he was called *Mneves*, as Francis Junius quotes it out of Diodorus Siculus; see his note *ad* Exod. ii. 10. John Weemse (*Christ. Synag.* lib. i. cap. 1, p. 21), following Aben Ezra, says they called him Monios. But see Junius, *loco citato.* Moses is mentioned by some heathen poets as a lawgiver, Juvenal, *Sat.* 14:—

> 'Tradidit arcano quodcunque volumine Moses.'

And Arator:—

> 'Non hæc jejunia Moses condidit.'

*The law which I gave unto him in Horeb.* A mountain in the country of Amalek and in the wilderness of Sinai, so called because of the dryness and barrenness; חרב, to be dried, and to wither. It is called, 1 Kings xix. 18, 'Horeb the mount of God;' not in regard of the height of it, as tall cedars are called the cedars of God, but because the Lord appeared there, and gave the law; for Horeb is mount Sinai, one mountain with two tops, the eastern called Sinai, and the western Horeb. Jac. Boufrerius, in his *Onomasticon*, tells us he hath disputed this question upon Exod. iii. 1, which book I have not, and therefore refer the reader to consult him there. It is at this day called Saint Catharine's mountain.

*Which I gave him.* God gave Moses the moral law writ with his own hand, as Deut. x. 2 seems to prove. See Weemse *Expos.* vol. i. lib. i. exer. 3.

*For all Israel.* Pagninus, 'to;' Montanus, 'upon;' *i.e.* for the use of all Israel.

*With the statutes and judgments.* Of them before. Only let me not pass this verse without notice of that which to me seems very observable, that the truth is, commentators upon this place can scarcely make a clear and fair coherence of this verse with the foregoing; but, as if the prophet were full of this necessary point, he inserts it (though to our seeming somewhat abruptly) rather than not mention it. An observation that offers unto our thoughts the very great necessity of acquainting ourselves with God's law, the benefit of which I refer the reader to find commended unto him in a learned and very fruitful treatise of Mr H. Mason, *Hearing and Doing*, chap. 5. This point hath been much beat upon by the fathers in their sermons or homilies to the people, in their exhortations and epistles to their private and dear

friends. Many of our men, in handling the controversy about permitting the reading of the Scripture to the people, have collected many and plentiful instances. I spare them. Only I would note the piety of some persons in their assiduous study of God's law. It is a known history which they relate of Alphonsus, king of Aragon. Let me add what Herbert Rosweid the Jesuit reports of Thomas à Kempis, the devout author of those books (which are and deserve to be in every one's hand), *De Imitatione Christi*, that as he spent his hours in reading the holy Scripture, so he wrote out the whole Bible, divided into four tomes, fairly and legibly with his own hand. And yet a great scholar too he was, a man wedded to his book, so much that this was his usual saying, and that which he was wont to write in the beginning of his books, *In omnibus requiem quæsivi, et nusquam inveni nisi in angulo cum libello*, I have sought content in all things, but never found it unless with a book in a nook.* But his most delight was in the book of God. How much was his zeal beyond the temper of these times, when many think it would hinder their scholarship to read much or oft in the Bible, which perhaps also is not to be found in some well furnished studies. The neglect of which, and preferring the handmaids (which yet are beautiful, and they blind, that do not confess so) before the mistress, hath been much complained of by many pious and learned men. Who can be large or full enough in the praise of the book of God? ψυχῆς τροφή, the soul's food, as St Athanasius calls it; κανὼν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκλινής, the invariable rule of truth, as St Irenæus. The aphorisms of Christ, the library of the Holy Ghost, the circle of all divine arts, the divine pandects, the wisdom of the cross, the cubit of the sanctuary, the touchstone of error;—but I will take myself off lest it be said to me, 'Who ever dispraised Hercules?' Only let me insert another instance for other kind of people, for lay people, for women. Not the example of any of those glorious women found and mentioned in St Jerome's epistles, famous and renowned for their piety this way; but a modern example, of Maudlin, the wife of D. Pareus, of whom, writing to John Newerus, pastor of St Peter's church, in Heidelberg, to preach her funeral sermon, he reports that, after she was married, and more than forty years of age, out of love to the holy Scriptures, she learnt to read, and took such delight in it, and especially in the Psalms, that she got them almost by heart. So much for this point, the necessity of which, some think, the Spirit of God would teach us, by the great *Zain*, in the word *Zicru, Recordamini*, in the text, in many Bibles. See John Buxtorfius *in Comment. Masor. cap.* 14.

2. He takes occasion to prepare their expectation by prophesying again of his forerunner, the Baptist, ver. 5, 6. We have,

* In een hoexken met een boexken.

(1.) His coming, ver. 5.
(2.) His work or office, ver. 6.

(1.) His coming: ver. 5, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.' The interpretation of this place hath very much divided the expositors. St Jerome took it once for all the prophets that should come; but he goes almost alone. A far greater party understand it of Elijah the Tishbite. For so the LXX read the very text (the Vatican and ordinary copies of the LXX, but not that which is in the king of Spain's Bible); and so also the Arabic, which usually follows the LXX; and some of the fathers (but not all whom Bellarmine allegeth, for Origen, Lactantius, Hilary, Jerome, who are produced by him, are examined by Dan. Chamier, *Panstrat. tom.* 2, *lib.* 17, *cap.* 5, *sect.* 17, 18, and found to bring him no proofs), St Chrysostom, Theodoret, St Augustine, and haply others of the ancients, being misled by the corrupt reading of the LXX, ἀποστελῶ ὑμῖν Ἠλίαν τὸν Θεσβίτην, 'I send unto you Elijah the Tishbite.' But this is not in the Hebrew text, which the learned popish expositors know, and yet they follow that of the LXX for another purpose than the ancients were aware of, as it is sufficiently known to divines in the question of antichrist. Benedict Pererius, *de Antichristo Disput.* 10, against John Annius, makes it one of his demonstrations that Mahomed is not antichrist; and so doth Bellarmine, that the bishop of Rome is not, because Enoch and Elijah are not yet come, and are to come in his time. Doctor Sharp, a learned man of ours (*De Antichristo, part* i. *cap.* 31), doth hereupon take occasion to compare Bellarmine to a frantic woman (whom, he saith, he knew), that pretended great acquaintance with the angel Gabriel, and tells us that surely Elias was the carrier. Methinks too lightly. I read nothing with pleasure that puts off a learned adversary with a scoff; but not without offence him who, through his weakness, doth magnify all Bellarmine's arguments, as surely the Suffolk author of the *Five Discourses, ann.* 1635, did, who, in his *Treatise of Antichrist*, useth no other. I will not take this text as a sufficient occasion to enter into the question who that antichrist should be. Let the characters used by St John and St Paul be impartially applied, and without ends, and I suppose there will be less controversy, especially that of St Paul, 2 Thes. ii. For light unto which I refer the reader unto Quirinus Reuterus his *Supply to Zanchy*, who here, through age and dimness of sight, broke off, which Reuterus undertook at the request of Zanchy's executors, and said much to this point, and with much approbation. But to pass by the question itself, whether the pope be antichrist, which the interpretation of this place, however it be, doth not conclude, the cardinal's arguments, that the Tishbite is prophesied of, are not unanswerable.

*Obj.* 1. This day, before which this Elijah is to come, is the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Therefore

the day of the second coming of Christ; for his first coming was an acceptable time and a day of salvation.

*Ans.* 1. The Hebrew may be rendered, 'Before the day of the great and dreadful Lord come.' And so the Chaldee reads it. 2. By granting it as we read it, yet נורא of ירא is not properly *terribile*, but *timendum*, to be feared or dreaded. Now fear is either from terror or from reverence; so it is Gen. xxviii. 17, 'How dreadful is this place!' saith Jacob; that is, reverend, because of the signs of the divine presence; see also Ezek. i. 21. Thus even the day of Christ's first coming is to be entertained with an awful dread and reverence. 3. That day, though a day of salvation to believers, yet was to others terrible, as it was described to be in the former chapter, ver. 2, and is oft described so in the New Testament, Luke ii. 34, Luke iii. 9, 17, Luke xix. 44, Mat. xxi. 44. See Casp. Blockmond, *System. Theol. vol.* 2, *artic.* 28. p. 831.

*Obj.* 2. It is added, 'lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.' But Christ's first coming was not to judge, but to be judged.

*Ans.* 1. It may be understood with Montanus and Winkleman, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamity that came upon the Jews upon Christ's first coming. 2. But I have all the way interpreted this chapter *comprehensivè*, even of the day of judgment also, and the sentence then to be given by Christ. Yet it follows not but the place may be meant of John Baptist's coming before Christ, to prepare men to believe, lest hereafter for their infidelity they be condemned. It follows not that he must come presently before that day.

*Obj.* 3. Christ speaking of Elias, Mat. ii. 14, saith, 'This is Elias (*qui venturus est*) which is for to come;' but John was come already.

*Ans.* The Greek ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι is *qui venturus erat*, 'which was for to come,' speaking of him whom (from Malachi's prophecy) they expected, and so might well be said of one that was already come, as we have the same phrase Mat. ii. 4, 'He demanded where Christ should be born.' Yet was Christ born already.

*Obj.* 4. John was, indeed, allegorically Elias, but not literally; therefore Christ speaking in the same place, Mat. xi. 14, of John, saith, 'If ye will receive it, this is Elias; that is, Elias is indeed for to come; yet if you will have one now also in this my first coming, this John is he.' But to shew that this is a mystery, he adds, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'

*Ans.* John was Elias literally, that is, in the prophet Malachi's literal sense; but because the scribes had another conceit (not of another time, as the papists, but of another person), that it must be the Tishbite; he tells them they mistake it in that, for the prophet in his literal sense meant John (as the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xxx. 9, meant the Messiah literally, as it is confessed, not David the son of Jesse, when he saith, 'They shall serve David their king'). And therefore he saith, 'If ye will receive him,' and adds, 'He that hath ears, let him hear.'

*Obj.* 5. Elias is prophesied of again, Rev. xi. 3, one of the two witnesses.

*Ans.* Besides the fuller meaning of that place, for which let the reader consult expositors, and especially Mr Joseph Mede's learned commentaries upon in his *Clavis Apoc.;* there is there no mention at all of Elias. It is but a begging to urge that text.

*Obj.* 6. Why else were Enoch and Elias rapt up before death, and do still live in their mortal flesh to die again, but that they are for that service before the last coming of Christ?

*Ans.* That they live in their bodies in heaven is not doubted (see Sixtin. Amama, *Antibarb. Bibl.* lib. iii., *Syrach.*, cap. xliv. p. 947, &c.), but that they live in their mortal bodies, and that they shall die, there is no scripture for it, neither is it likely, seeing the Scripture saith of Enoch, Heb. xi. 5, 'He was translated that he should not see death.' See Joseph Scaliger's note upon Mat. xvii. 11, among those few short notes of his which John Bill the king's printer hath carefully collected at the end of his impression of the New Testament, Greek, at London, 1622. But why they were rapt up, we must be content to be ignorant, and it beseems us most to be so. More of this point you have well treated of in the following commentary.

Being thus rid of this interpretation, we have another which interprets the place of Christ's first coming; and we have St Mark's authority for it, who makes the last words of Malachi to be the first words of his gospel, and therefore leads us to understand by Elias in the prophet, John Baptist in his Gospel; and that we may be further out of doubt, we have the text clearly so expounded, Luke i. 16, 17. See Laurentius Valla, his *Castigation of the Vulg. Lat.*, according to the corrected edition of Jacobus Rivius, Mat. xi. 14, 15, Mat. vii. 10–13, which places let the reader peruse. The name of Elias is given to John, not *propter identitatem personæ*, as if Elias were *redivivus*, or by a metempsychosis were entered into John's body, but *propter identitatem spiritus et virtutis*, because of the like gifts, calling, and ministry. See Junius, *parall.* lib. i. par. 31, Pet. Martyr., *Loc. Clas.* iii. cap. xvi. sect. 21, 22; but especially our late blessed king of famous memory, in his monitory preface before his learned *Apology for the Oath of Allegiance*, p. 77, 78, whose arguments are examined by Leonard Lessius, *Disp. de Antichr. Demonstr.* 15, but stand good. And besides ours, some learned and ingenious papists, as Paul. Burgensis, Isid. Clarius, Benedict, Arias Montanus, *in locum*, who do all admit our interpretation, and Bishop Jansenius too, in chap. xlviii. Ecclus., as Benedict Pererius affirms of him, lib. xv., *in Daniel*, p. 223, D.

Let me here note by the way the conceit of Lucas Osiander, who, as he yields the place to be meant of John

Baptist, the second Elias before Christ's first coming; so he also interprets it of a third Elias before Christ's second coming, and that is, Martin Luther; and accordingly interprets the following words, and exhorts to the receiving of Luther's doctrine, lest God come and punish our ingratitude. Luther, indeed, was a man of notable zeal like Elias, fit for the business he was employed in by God, and we have great reason to think honourably of him, but none to think that Malachi thought of him, or that the Holy Ghost meant him here. Thus much of the coming of John.

(2.) His work or office is declared in the last verse. 'And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.' For their interpretation of this who respect only the second coming of Christ, let the reader see Cornelius à Lapide. I content myself with that of our following author, that whereas all was at that time out of order, full of corruptions, and errors, and different sects (see Tremellius, *ad marg.*, Zech. xi. 8), John was sent to preach repentance, Mat. iii. 2, and to convert of all sorts from the error of their way, and to reduce them to the faith of the old patriarchs. But for the manner of the phrase, Junius, *parall.* lib. i. par. 55, makes it parallel to Luke i. 76, 77, 79, and so it will bring in further light; add also Luke i. 17, where observe that the word of the LXX is not used; theirs is ἀποκαταστῆσαι, but St Luke's is ἐπιστρέψαι. The evangelists and apostles, though usually they follow, yet sometimes take liberty to depart from, the LXX; and concerning the Vulgar Latin translation, John Gagneius, a Sorbonnist, professeth he cannot tell the meaning of it, but falls very foul upon Cardinal Cajetan. Yet his own conjecture of the misplacing of τὸ ἐπὶ there in the original text, is bold. See him, *ad loc.*, together with Beza, his larger annotations on the same place.

*Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.* The coherence of this, and the meaning, see before *objection* 2, and the *answer*.

*Lest I come.* The coming of Christ is not uncertain, but the smiting. I read it, 'Lest I smite when I come.'

*And smite the earth.* St Jerome, earthly men; not Judea only, though sometimes ארץ be taken for a particular region, as Gen. xli. 57, Isa. xiii. 5; yet probably the calamity of the Jews may be principally respected.

*With a curse.* Geneva, 'cursing;' Chaldee, 'extermination;' Pagninus, 'slaughter;' The LXX, ἄξδην, wholly, suddenly, πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἄξδην, 'Lest I smite the earth with utter destruction.' חרם is an utter curse, or devoting to ruin, which *cherem*, the Rabbins say, doth enter into the members of the body, the number of which they observe to be according to the numeral letters of this word. The Jews had three sorts of anathemas: 1. *Niddui*, rejection or removing; he that was *menuddeth*, was removed out of the synagogue, ἀποσυνάγωγος, John ix. 22. Thus they hold Cain was excommunicate, Gen. iv. 14, Isa. lxvi. 5. This was of the nature of profligation or proscription among the Romans. 2. *Cherem*, which is more properly that which is *anathema* among the Greeks, which is the curse that they laid upon him whom they put out of the synagogue, if he mended not; 'A giving over to Satan,' 1 Cor. v. 5, 1 Tim. i. 20. At this they lighted candles and put them out again, to note that such a one was deprived of the light of heaven. This is the word used here. And this among us is the highest ecclesiastical censure, according to the tables of Dr Richard Cosin, who (*Polit. Eccl. Anglic. Tab. V. A.*) makes these degrees: (1.) *interdictio divinorum;* (2.) *monitio;* (3.) *suspensio vel ab ingressu ecclesiæ, vel a perceptione sacramentorum;* (4.) *excommunicatio*; (5.) *anathematismus, contra hæreticum pertinacem.* 3. There is a third degree among the Jews, called *sham-atha*, the extreme and highest degree of excommunication; the etymology of which word is either, 1, of *sam*, *desolate*, and *attha*, *thou:* 'Thou art desolate;' or, 'Be thou desolate.' 2. Of *sham*, *there*, and *mita*, *death:* 'There is death,' or an excommunication to death; as 1 John v. 16, 'There is a sin unto death.' Or, 3, of *shem* or *suma* in the Chaldee, *the Lord*, or *the Name;* that is, the *Tetragrammaton*, *Jehovah;* and *atha*, *he comes;* 'The Lord comes.' A form of speech used by them in sudden accidents, as the most learned Heinsius observes, *Exercit.*, lib. vii. cap. 15, and especially by such as suffered any oppressions, whereby they still comforted themselves. This is the same with that which St Paul useth after the Syriac, where *Maran* is *the Lord; Maran-atha*, 'The Lord comes:' 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'He that loves not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maran-atha;' which curse they fetch from the first words of Enoch's prophecy, Jude ver. 14. And thus much for the last contestation, and for the whole text.

For the close, we may take notice of a double observation.

1. That in many copies (though not here, in Montanus his *Interlin.*, nor in two others that I have) the last verse but one in Isaiah, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and this prophecy of Malachi, is repeated again after the text but without points, because all these books have sad closes, and therefore the scribes thought fit to leave the verse before to be last, for the recreating the spirits of the reader, as containing more comfortable matter. See John Buxtorfius, *de Abbrev. Hebraic*, in יתקק.

2. That all the prophets, except Jonah and Nahum, expressly end in some prophecy concerning Christ, he being the mark at which all of them chiefly aimed; and let him be our aim likewise. Blessed is he who carefully expects his second appearance. 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'

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* This Table refers to Stock's Exposition, as well as to Torshell's Exercitation.—Ed.

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END OF TORSELL ON MALACHI.

# BERNARD ON RUTH.

# RUTH'S RECOMPENCE:

OR,

# A COMMENTARY UPON THE BOOK OF RUTH

DELIVERED IN SEVERAL SERMONS;

THE BRIEF SUM WHEREOF IS NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

BY

RICHARD BERNARD,

PREACHER OF GOD'S WORD AT BATCOMBE IN SOMERSETSHIRE.

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.

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M.DCCC.LXV.

# RICHARD BERNARD.

THOSE who have anything to do in the shape of researches among the old Literature of England, are somewhat puzzled about the identity of a very frequently recurring name, to wit, RICHARD BERNARD. Only other two Richards—the authors of 'The Saint's Everlasting Rest' and of 'The Bruised Reed,' Richard Baxter and Richard Sibbes—turn up in so many title-pages. But there is this difference with Richard Bernard from the other two, and indeed from all the numerous Richards we know,* that it is found in the most opposite kind of title-pages, the one as unlikely to represent the other as if Richard Baxter or Richard Sibbes appeared here to a 'Book of Jests' and there to a 'Sermon.' You find Richard Bernard now as the quaint and racy translator of Terence, and now as author of the oddest of odd treatises on 'Witchcraft;' again fronting a little volume that Sir Philip Sidney might have written on the 'Bible Battles,' and anon you have it to some rich, 'savoury,' quickening, practical book, exalting Christ. But as you are perplexed over these, you have still again the name of Richard Bernard at these two widely sundered poles, on a curious tractate demanding respect to conscience, and with biting sarcasm exposing the High Church claims of the Prelates, and the like;† and, on the other hand, you have it to at least two volumes angrily denouncing all

* It may be remarked in a footnote, since the thing comes up, that the name 'Richard' is singularly frequent among our old Divines and Worthies. We offer our note of some of them as a contribution to the Literature of 'Names' now being so largely augmented. Of the Puritans and 'Ejected' *proper* there were Richard Adams, Richard Blackerby, Richard Alleine, Richard Capel, Richard Clifton, Richard Astley, Richard Crackenthorp, Richard Avery, Richard Denton, Richard Batchelor, Richard Crick, Richard Batten, Richard Gawton, Richard Babbington, Richard Greenham, Richard Culmer, Richard Davis, Richard Bickle, Richard Binmore, Richard Mather, Richard Proud, Richard Chantyre, Richard Blinman, Richard Clayton, Richard Buress, Richard Byfield (Shakespeare's minister), Richard Rothwell, Richard Rogers, Richard Stocke, Richard Sedgwick, Richard Taverner, Richard Vines, Richard Cook, Richard Cooper, Richard Coore, Richard Wavel, Richard Whitehurst, Ritchard Whiteway, Richard Wooley, Richard Worts, Richard Wyne, Richard Martyn, Richard Herring, Richard Kennet, Richard Mayo, Richard More, Richard Morton, Richard Serjeant, Richard Smith, Richard Southwell, Richard Steel, Richard Stretton, Richard Swift, Richard Swynfen, Richard Symmonds, Richard Eeds, Richard Thorpe, Richard Thorp, Richard Dowley, Richard Dyer, Richard Fairclough, Richard Farrant, Richard Fincher, Richard Flavel, Richard Fowler, Richard Gilpin, Richard Holbrook, Richard Hawes, Richard Heath, Richard Hopkins, Richard Taylor, Richard Turner, Richard Dowler, Richard Down, Richard Drayton, Richard Frankland, Richard Garret, Richard Vin, Richard Goodwin, Richard Gyles, Richard Hilton, Richard Hincks, Richard Hook, Richard Jennings, Richard Kentish, Richard Lawrence, Richard Maudesley, Richard Moor, Richard Northam, Richard Parr, Richard Penwarden, Richard Perrot, Richard Rand, Richard Resbury, Richard Roberts, Richard Saddler, Richard Saunders, and, finally, there is RICHARD HOOKER. It were easy to extend the roll. What is the explanation of this former plenty, as compared with the modern scarceness of Richards?

† 'Twelve arguments proving that the Ceremonies imposed upon the Ministers of the Church of England, by the Prelates, are unlawful; and, therefore, that the Ministers of the Gospel, for the bare and sole omission of them, for conscience' sake, are most unjustly charged with disloyalty to his majesty.'

'Separation,' and treating the Nonconformists as if they were the 'offscouring of the earth,' and thereby fetching down upon himself the mailed hand of John Robinson of the '*Mayflower*' Pilgrim Fathers, and the no less powerful Henry Ainsworth, not to speak of the termagan ribaldry of John Smyth.

You read the present reprint of an exposition of 'Ruth;' and as you feel refreshed as with the blowing of bean-blossom-scented breezes in your evening walk, you fancy its author as a 'gentle spirit,' living apart from the crowd in cloistered piety, the *pastor* of some small rural flock, bringing the odours of kine and grass into some antique village church; but as you open the 'Threefold Treatise on the Sabbath,' there looks out upon you the leonine and craggy face—recalling 'rare Ben's'—of a man of gigantic mould, self-evidently one to snuff the 'smell of battle' afar off, and to revel in mighty Controversy, Papist or Brownist. Yet again there is put into your hand the 'Thesaurus Biblicus,' second only in laboriousness to the 'Concordance' of Alexander Cruden, telling of immense midnight labour over the words of The Bible; and as you put it gratefully down, you have to turn next to still another pastoral volume, 'The Faithful Shepherd,'—meet to lie on the same shelf with the *Gildas Salvianus* itself; or mayhap you are held as with *the* 'glittering eye' by that book so far ahead of its age, his 'Ready way to Good Works;' or not less so with 'The Isle of Man, or Proceedings in Manshire,' which, if it be not the prototype of Bunyan's immortal Allegory, is full of wit, wisdom, penetration, and ineffable touches, as of the tints in sea-shells, or in the cups of flowers.

And so we might go on through very many more books, some larger, some lesser, some stormy, some peaceful, some practical, even finely spiritual, and some, alas! 'set on fire of hell' with the wildest fanatic fire of passion. And yet it is certain the RICHARD BERNARD is one—a many-sided, opulent, remarkable man, of whom it were surely desirable to know more. 'The more's the pity' that, except what his own books supply, there are few memorials left us. These we proceed to gather up; and perchance, in this case and the others, our Memoir may incite to inquiry and interest, those to whom more leisure is given than to ourselves.

RICHARD BERNARD was born in the year 1567, as his age at death informs us, which age is inscribed on the striking portrait already alluded to. But neither the birth-date exactly nor his birth-place appears to be known. He is not among the 'Worthies' of any of the Shires in Fuller's all-embracing and never-to-be-made-old 'History,' though placed by him among the 'learned writers' of his College. Curiously enough there is no Bernard in all his roll. A Richard Bernard appears in the Registers of Christ's College, Cambridge, as proceeding B.A. 1567–68. He is *supposed*, but improbably, to have been the father of our Richard. Though Fuller and all other authorities thus fail us in regard to the birth-place, an incidental expression in one of his Latin 'Epistles Dedicatory' designates Nottinghamshire as his 'native soil,' as we shall see in the sequel.

Our Richard Bernard was, like the other named, of Christ's, Cambridge. Though his matriculation is not now to be found, he probably proceeded B.A. 1594–5 (but at that period the University Registers are defective), and certainly passed M.A. in 1598. This is all that our excellent friend Mr Cooper of Cambridge has been able to send us from the Cambridge *archives*.

We learn from other sources that when a mere youth, he fell under the notice of two ladies, daughters of Sir Christopher Wray, Lord Chief-Justice of England, pre-eminent even in those days for Christian large-heartedness and 'labours of love.' One of them was the wife successively of Godfrey Foljambe, Esq.; Sir William Bowes of Walton, near Chesterfield; and of John, the good Lord Darcy of Aston. The other married Sir George Saint Paul (spelled 'Saintpoll') of Lincolnshire; and afterwards, the Earl of Warwick: as Countess of Warwick appearing in very

many old 'Epistles Dedicatory.' It was these truly noble sisters who sent Master Richard to Cambridge, and he is never weary of acknowledging their kindness to him. Thus it will be observed that in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to his 'Ruth' to the Countess of Warwick, he speaks very gratefully of all that she had done for him. Earlier in his 'Dedication' of his first book, 'Terence,' he describes these two sisters as those 'to whom, next to God and nature, he owed all that he had;' and in the same of his 'Christian Advertisements and Counsels of Peace,' addressing 'Sir George Saintpoll and his virtuous Ladie,' he makes the same acknowledgment. It is pleasing to find that the friends of his youth remained stedfastly his friends in his old age.

Richard Bernard was living at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, in 1598, whence he dated his translation of 'Terence.' Thus one noticeable man preceded SAMUEL WESLEY in this now famous 'parish,' where was born JOHN WESLEY, and later Alexander Kilham,—names venerable beyond the pale of Methodism.

One is vexed on turning expectantly to Archdeacon Stonehouse's 'History of the Isle of Axholm,' within whose boundaries Epworth lies, to find no notice whatever of our Worthy, albeit the Smiths, Browns, Robinsons, and Joneses, are superfluously chronicled.

From Epworth he was 'presented to the living,' which is a vicarage, of Worksop, in Nottinghamshire. The presentation was by a Richard Whalley,—whether of the regicide's family we know not,—and he received institution on the 19th of June 1601.*

Of his Worksop 'ministry' it is said, 'he experienced great encouragement in his ministry, and was exceedingly beloved by his people. As a preacher he was much followed, and his labours were rendered a blessing to many.' †

He sent out several of his books from Worksop, as the dates 1605 and onward shew. One of the most memorable biographically is the following:—

'Christian Advertisements and Counsels of Peace. Also disuasions from the Separatists schisme, commonly called Brownisme, which is set apart from such truths as they take from vs and other Reformed Churches, and is nakedly discoured, that so the falsitie thereof may better be discerned, and so iustly condemned and wisely avoided. Published for the benefit of the humble and godlie louer of the truthe. By Richard Bernard, Preacher of God's Word. Reade (my friend) considerately; expound charitably; and judge I pray thee, without partialitie: doe as thou wouldest bee done vnto. At London, Imprinted by Felix Kyngston. 1608' (18mo.)

This quaint title-page recalls one of those epoch-making events in the History of England and of the World, which, in their apparent outward insignificance originally, contrast astoundingly with the greatness, even magnificence, of their after-development. Joseph Hunter has told, with much loving detail, the story of the 'Church' of Scrooby, from whence went forth the Pilgrim-Fathers, the Founders of New England, and in *it* of the mighty Republic of the United States of America (which may God deliver from its present agony!). Thither,‡ and to the many memorial-volumes furnished by America itself—for Scrooby is to Americans what Runymede is to Englishmen and Bannockburn to the Scot—the reader is referred. Suffice it here that Richard Bernard by his *locale* and opinions and feelings, was brought into union and communion with the 'Separatists,' and treacherously and falsely as they alleged, but conscientiously as he himself affirmed and we are bound to believe, withdrew from them. Thereafter commenced *his* invec-

* Collections concerning the Church or Congregation of Protestant Separatists, formed at Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire, in the time of King James I., the founders of New Plymouth, the parent colony of New England. By the Rev. Joseph Hunter, London. One vol. 8vo, 1854, p. 37.

† Brook, Lives of the Puritans, ii. p. 460.

‡ See title-page, *supra*.

tives and *their* replies, through many a passionate, criminatory and recriminatory, volume and tractate.

It were pity to stir the long cooled embers of this ancient Controversy. Churchman and Nonconformist alike have admitted that while on each side there can be no question of sincerity and loyalty to what they believed to be The Truth, nevertheless the good men were morbidly jealous, mutually exaggerated difficulties and differences, and sadly lacked that charity 'which thinketh no evil' in construing others' motives and doings. Bernard we may allow, briefly, to speak for himself: —In his 'Christian Advertisements,' he says with reference to the 'Separation :'—'It grieveth me much to see this breach made amongst us; loss it is to the Church, gain to the enemy, and then what true good to themselves? Many laugh at it, some account it a matter scarce worthy thinking upon, and so few or none lament it. To me hath it been just cause of sorrow, and therefore could I not lightly pass it by; but in love to such as yet abide with us, and in desire to do my best to recover again mine own whom God once gave me, I have published these things.' Again :—'Confidence in our cause (that here is a true Church of God, from which we may not make separation) hath made me adventurous : and the spiritual injury which some of late have done to me, more than to many, hath called me hereunto. They have taken away part of the seal of my ministry.'*

Once more, here are certain personal admissions :—'Such as have had a little taste of the way, and affection to the same, *misled by imagined truths, and by the honesty of the men for their lives, and some former familiarity had with them in an even way* (which indeed are the ordinary baits by which many are catched); yet at length perceiving the falsehood thereof, which is called Brownism, they have upon good considerations deliberated, and on deliberation and searching found out the errors thereof, and so left them. These, they condemn as apostates and what not.'†

Further, in his 'Plaine Evidences The Chvrch of England is Apostolicall, the Separation Schismaticall. Directed against Mr Ainsworth the Separatist and Mr Smith the Se-Baptist: Both of them severally opposing the Book called the Separatist's Schisme. By Richard Bernard, Preacher of the Word of God at Worksop. For truth and peace to any indifferent iudgment. Printed by T. Snodham for Edward Weaver and William Welby, and are to be sould at their shops in Paules Churchyard' (1610. 4to.), he thus notices Ainsworth's sarcastic and contemptuous retort : 'He calls that light which I knew of their way ; but I *now* judge it darkness, *through knowledge of the truth now, whereof I was ignorant then.* I see now by the light, their darkness, our truth, their errors, and yet bewail personal corruptions.' ‡

We have in these,—a few out of many similar personal passages,—the real state of the case as between Bernard and his former friends and associates, the despised 'Separatists.' Equally with them he was a Puritan in 'doctrine' and in life, and a Nonconformist in well-nigh everything they objected to, 'carrying,' in the words of another, 'to an extreme length the Puritan scruples, going to the very verge of separation, and joining himself even to those of his Puritan brethren who thought themselves qualified to go through the work of exorcism.'§ Not only so, but he was 'silenced' by the Archbishop. Was it unnatural or unreasonable that his fellow-labourers expected that he would 'break' from The Church? But, as Mr Ashton remarks, 'he was a zealous and devoted minister of the Gospel, and a distinguished Puritan, but deficient in the moral courage requisite to constitute him a Reformer. He vacillated between the Church and the Separation, often avowing his determination to leave the Establishment ;

* and † The 'Epistles' to the Reader, &c., and p. 51. | ‡ Page 2. § Hunter, as before, p. 37.

and on one occasion actually resigned the living of Worksop, but afterwards repented, subscribed again, was restored to his preferment, and continued a Churchman till his death.' *

We get a glimpse of him during this vacillating period, through the lurid pages of John Smyth. Referring to a particular place in his book, this undoubtedly over-vehement writer, but loyal man to conscience, says :—' By this place Mr Bernard intended to sin against conscience, for he did acknowledge this truth we now profess, divers times, and was upon the point of separation with some of his people with him ; yet loving the world and preferment, as Naaman is thought to do, he chose rather to stay still in the vicarage against his conscience, than to lose it and to follow Christ with a good conscience. Do you not remember, Mr Bernard, *what you said to me and Mr Robert Southworth*, coming together from W[orksop], that, speaking of the danger of walking in this truth of Christ we now profess, you said you could easily die upon the tree for the truth, *but you could not, without great horror, think of being burned as the martyrs were in Queen Mary's days ;* and that all the journey you were casting how to despatch your estate, and get away with safety ?' † On the whole, without imputing sin against conscience so harshly and recklessly as John Smyth, and even John Robinson and Henry Ainsworth did, it must be conceded that Bernard sought, according to Robinson, ' rather to oppress the person of his adversary with false and proud reproaches, than to convince (= convict, refute) his tenets by sound arguments.'‡ Sadly true, as might be abundantly illustrated ; nevertheless, —so strange a thing is conscience with an infirm will,—we unhesitatingly accept Bernard's own final declaration :—' If I were not persuaded in my soul that here is the true Church of God, I profess unfeignedly (by God's help), that I would renounce my standing, whatever wicked and uncharitable hearts censure to the contrary.'§ Pity that the excellent man could not accredit others with equal honesty and ' liberty !'

RICHARD BERNARD remained at Worksop until about 1613, in which year he was called upon to transfer his services to that place which is most of all associated with him, viz. Batcombe in Somersetshire. Thither he was summoned by the devout, and indeed well-nigh angelic, Dr Bis or Bisse. This venerable man had been himself pastor from the dawn of the Reformation, and had purchased the advowson of his ' living,' to present once only, for £200. To his honour be it told, that though he had a son in the church, he stedfastly resolved to bestow it ' as the Lord should direct him.' On ' presenting ' Bernard to it, he thus, like another Patriarch, spoke : ' I do this day lay aside nature, respect of profit, flesh and blood, in thus bestowing as I do my living, only in hope of profiting and edifying my people's souls,' after which he did not live above three weeks. This, his last act, he called his ' packing-penny ' between God and himself. ‖

We have an interesting retrospective reference to the Worksop ' ministry ' in the ' Epistle

* Works of John Robinson, vol. ii. p. vi. We have these and other similar *data* in another passage from Smyth: —' Master Bernard,' he says, ' I have sufficient reason that has moved me to break silence in respect of you, and by this letter to attempt a further trial of your pretended zeal for the truth and faith of Christ. I have long time observed the applause yielded you by the multitude. Likewise I have taken notice of your forwardness in leading to a Reformation by public proclamations in several pulpits, as if you had meant, contrary to the king's mind, to have carried all the people of the country after you against the ceremonies and subscription. Afterwards, having lost your Vicarage of Worksop for refusing subscription or conformity, I have observed how you revolted back, and upon subscription made to the Prelate of York, have re-entered upon your Vicarage. Again, I have noted your vehement desire to the patronage of Sowerby, and your extreme indignation when you were defeated of it ; further, your earnest desire to have been Vicar of Gainsborough, and all this after your subscription ; besides, I have carefully weighed with myself your steadiness to embrace the truth we profess.' (P. 5.)

† Quoted by Hunter, as before, p. 117.

‡ ' The People's Plea for the Exercise of Prophecy : against Mr John Yates his Monopoly. By John Robinson. 1618. 12mo, p. vi.

§ ' Plaine Evidences,' p. 4.

‖ Brook, as before, ii. p. 460.

Perhaps by ' packing penny ' good Dr Bisse accommodated the old Charon fee to Christian use. It reminds us of the saying of an old Scotchman upon his death bed. Visited by his minister, and questioned as to his state, his reply was, ' I'm just packing, sir, just packing,' *i.e.* making ready.

It is of Dr Bis or Bisse that Fuller records the punning epitaph,—

' *Bis* fuit hic natus, puer et *Bis*, *Bis* juvenisque,
*Bis* vir, *Bis*que senex, *Bis* doctor, *Bis*que sacer.'

Worthies, as before, iii. p. 107.

Dedicatory' to 'The Faithfull Shepherd: Wholly in a manner transposed and made anew, and very much inlarged, both with precepts and examples, to further young Divines in the studie of Divinitie. With the Shepherd's Practise in the end. By Richard Bernard, Minister and Preacher of God's Word at Batcombe in Somerset. London: Printed for Thomas Pavier, 1621 (12mo).'* Addressing the Archbishop of York, he says,—

'I call to mind mine own happiness in particular, above many, when I lived in those parts: I enjoy God's blessing (praised be his name) where I am, and it was *digitus Dei* that reached it out unto me, *agnoscunt omnes, qui nôrunt:* but yet my then present means, in the presence of my many honourable and other good friends, and your grace's so large provision for me for the time to come, should have contented me. *My removing was loss*, especially in the want of so gracious a diocesan.' †

Again, in the Latin 'Epistle Dedicatory,' already mentioned, he makes like reference to the providential character of his call from Worksop to Batcombe. As stated before, too, he herein informs us that Nottinghamshire, in which Worksop is, was his native county. The passage has been overlooked, and as it is of interest, may here be given. Addressing the Bishop of Bath and Wells (Arthur Lake, if we err not,—whose folio of 'Sermons' is full of riches), and gratefully acknowledging past goodness, he proceeds:—

'Nam, dum in Academia Cantabrigiensi, bonis literis operam darem, paupertatem meam ille sublevavit; ex quo autem, relicta Academia, in publicum prodirem, humanissime semper habitum consilio, atque auxilio juvit, et cohonestavit; pro sua demum singulari in me benevolentia, *ex natali solo* evocatum, haud vanâ spe detinuit: donec, numinis divini suasu, vir ille venerabilis, Phil. Bissus, sacræ Theologiæ Doctor (et pastor vigilantissimus, quem hic etiam non possum non honoris gratia nominare, Beneficii sui cujus advocationem esset nactus successorem me diceret, scriberetque), tamen ne rem meam pluris quam Ecclesiam Dei,' &c.‡

The former Patron and Bishop-Friend who is so affectionately remembered in this Epistle and elsewhere, was the Bishop of Winchester, his Diocesan while at Worksop, who was a fellow-student at Cambridge and brother to one of his lady-friends, as he tells us in his 'Epistle Dedicatory' to the 'Ready Way to Good Works.' Addressing Sir John Wray and his Lady, he thus recalls and combines the family goodness to him:—

'Who ever tasted more deeply than myself, of the charitable liberality and singular bounty of that right honourable lady, the Lady Frances, Countess of Warwick, Dowager, lately deceased, who first sent me unto, and planted me in, the University? How bountiful, likewise, was the hand of that noble lady, Isabell, the Lady Darcy, to many, and to me in particular, while my abode was in those parts, with my loving parishioners of Worksop. I cannot but commemorate so transcendent goodness of those your right honourable aunts to you, so noble-minded friends towards me, imitating therein your worthy father and your blessed mother, sister to that my honourable good lord, the right reverend father in God, James, the Lord Bishop of Winchester, who when he was Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, sent for me into these parts, whereunto I dwell, not by solicitation of friends, but only out of his former remembrance of me in Cambridge, where he was then to me a liberal and memorable benefactor.'

Set down in the county of JOHN HOOPER, Bishop and 'Martyr,' if RICHARD BERNARD shewed not his 'striving unto blood' for the truth, he certainly sought to preach the same 'everlasting Gospel;' while in his love of 'wise saws and modern instances,' he ranged himself with another Somerset son, Thomas Coryat,—in whose extraordinary farrago-volume there is more of wit and sparkle than in a score of more reputed books.

All accounts go to shew that, not in name only (and it is his favourite name, as his title-pages

* It is worth while to note that, among others, 'The F. S.' is dedicated to 'Thomas Adams,' as one of B.'s friends.

† Epistle Dedicatory.

‡ Ep. Ded. to 'A Key of Knowledge, for the Opening of the Secret Mysteries of St Iohn's Mystical Revelation. By Richard Barnard, preacher of God's Word at Batcombe in Somerset. The contents ar (*sic*) in the next page before the booke. At London, imprinted by Felix Kyngston, 1617.' 4to (Engraved emblematic title).

evidence), but as a blessed reality, the 'Minister' of Batcombe was a 'Preacher of God's Word;' faithfully, earnestly, anxiously, in season and out of season, watching for souls. In spite of his unworthy accusations and 'flouting' of the 'Separatists,' he still 'held fast' to his objections to the 'Ceremonies,' never using them, never compromising. He was 'indulged' by the good Bishop. The position he took was very much that of THOMAS CARTWRIGHT, who, it must be remembered, equally with him, wrote against the 'Brownists,' and also against 'Separation' from the Church. Indeed, with all the Puritans the idea of 'Separation' was a terror as well as a sorrow. The wisest and holiest were 'driven' out with bleeding hearts. Hence the reiteration of sentiments such as these, which we cull from Bernard's 'Seven Golden Candlesticks:'* 'Be no fantastical Anabaptist; the true Spirit informeth the mind out of the Word. . . . Be no schismatical Brownist.'† Again, 'Heresy razeth the foundation; schism cuts off communion.'‡ Therefore, 'be not a Laodicean Conformitant, nor yet a preposterous Reformitant.'§ Once more: 'Bear with lighter faults for a time till fit occasion be offered to have them mended,' and 'likelihoods of evil, make them not apparent evil, by ill interpretations, when neither the State intendeth it nor so maintains it.'‖ Finally, 'Wholly condemn not that ministry which a godly man may make for good.'¶ It is easy to see how, conscious of his own integrity, though forgetful to admit like integrity in his opponents, our Worthy reconciled himself to adhesion to the Church, hoping against hope to 'reform' from within, not from without. All very well; if only those who saw no other course than to 'come out and be *separate* had been spared reviling and scorn, slander and injury. It is a satisfaction to know that his 'controversies' occupied but a small space in the 'Life' of Richard Bernard, that for the days and pages devoted to them there were long years and many volumes, given with a beautiful consecration to the SERVICE of The Master; for the Pastor of Batcombe was the antitype of his own 'Faithful Shepherd.' He died in March 1641. It must have been very near to the close of the month; for his 'Epistle Dedicatory' to his 'Threefold Treatise on the Sabbath' bears date 'London, March 20th 1641.' Fitting close to a noble 'Life,' a Book on 'The Sabbath;' and then away to enjoy the 'Everlasting Rest.' As he had Robert Balsom, one of the saintliest of the early Puritans, for 'assistant' at Batcombe, and afterwards good Edward Bennet, so his successor was the great and good Richard Alleine, who was one of the 'Ejected' in 1662. Conant has left an excellent summary of his character and labours. We may read it:—

'I had for sundry years past,' he says, 'some intimate acquaintance with him, during which time, as, by the testimony of many godly and learned persons long before, he hath constantly been very laborious in the public exercise of his ministry; the fruit whereof was sealed by the conversion of many souls to God. His labours in the ministry were bestowed not only in his own congregation, but in several of the adjacent market towns, where weekly lectures were for many years continued, by the free and voluntary assistance of pious, godly, and orthodox divines, until they were, by the last bishop of that diocese, to the great prejudice of many souls, imperiously suppressed. In his ministerial work he was a leader and pattern to many, exemplifying in his sermons that method of preaching which many years since, in his "Faithful Shepherd," he prescribed, or at least proposed, in writing. Divers painful and profitable labourers in the Lord's vineyard had their first initiation and direction from and under him, to whom also many others had recourse, and from whom they borrowed no small light and encouragement. His people, by his constant pains in catechising (wherein he had an excellent facility), as well as his preaching, were more than ordinary proficients in the knowledge of the things of God: and the youth of his congregation were very ready in giving a clear account of their faith, whereof he would often speak with much rejoicing. That the knowledge of his people was not merely speculative, appeared by the many liberal contributions which, for pious and charitable uses, were made by them; wherein, I suppose, they were not inferior to any congregation in the

* 'The Seaven Golden Candlestickes, England's Honour. The Great Mysterie of God's Mercie yet to Come. With Peace to the pure in heart, aduising to Vnitie among our selues. By Richard Bernard, Minister at Batcombe in Somersetshire. London, Printed for Iohn Budge, dwelling in Paul's Church-yard, at the signe of the Green Dragon, 1621. 12mo. † *Ibid.* p. 2.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 3. § *Ibid.* p. 4. ‖ *Ibid.* p. 5. ¶ *Ibid.* p. 6.

whole county wherein he lived.' . . . . . 'His preaching and catechising were accompanied with zeal, frequency, and fervency in prayer, wherein he was very ready and powerful, and whereby all his other labours became the more successful. With all these, his ordinary and more private conversation held a good correspondence; he being bold, expert, and candid in admonishing or reproving, as occasion presented; tender also and cordial in comforting the afflicted or wounded spirit; and, in a word, he shewed much integrity in all his actions. He was, in his private studies, according to that strong constitution wherewith God had blessed him, indefatigable; the benefit whereof the church of God enjoyeth, in those many tractates written and printed by him, as most men versed in theological studies will give testimony."*

We have already, in the course of our Memoir, mentioned the leading writings of Richard Bernard, and also indicated their general character. We place below the title-pages of his rarer books and tractates not already given, or to be given,† and would only more specifically notice three of them, because of the opinions they advocate, and one of the three, from the reflected honour cast upon it, as having been regarded as the prototype of John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.'

First of all, let it be noted, to the honour of the 'minister' of Batcombe, that on three questions that have subsequently received large and enlarging attention he spoke out faithfully, passionately and compassionately, when all others were in a manner silent. The 'Epistle Dedicatory' of his 'Isle of Man' makes a most arousing and generous appeal in behalf of 'poor prisoners.' Sure we are JOHN HOWARD had thanked RICHARD BERNARD for his burning and thrilling words. We can only select a few out of many similar ones. 'The state of poor prisoners,' he says, 'is well known, and how their souls' safety is neglected; and yet our Saviour gave such a testimony to a penitent thief, as he never gave to any mortal man else; for he told him that he should be that day with him in Paradise.' Again, 'How blessed a work would it be to have maintenance raised for a learned, godly, and grave divine, that might attend to instruct them daily? Twelve pence a quarter of one parish with another in our county, would encourage some compassionate holy man thereunto. And what is this? Not a mite out of every man's purse to save souls.' There then follow admirable suggestions as to work to be imposed and other arrangements; and having, by name, brought up the different magistrates of the county, he breaks out, 'Oh let me be bold earnestly to beseech you, and in all humility to crave your merciful and tender bowels of compassion towards them.' Again, a most urgent appeal to judges, sheriffs, and all magistrates, and finally these affecting words: 'The work surely would bless you all. Alas! the prison now is a very picture of hell, and (more is the pity) as the case now stands, is no less than a preparative thereto, for want of daily instruction.' . . . . . 'The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ persuade your well-disposed hearts *to such an unbegun work*, among so many deeds very famous in this renowned nation.' Surely in the History of Philanthropy in relation to the 'prison-house,' this pioneer to a blessed Reform deserves no stinted honour.

* From the 'Epistle' to 'The Reader' prefixed to Bernard's posthumous work, 'Thesaurus Biblicus,' folio, 1644, pp. 2, 3.

† The Fabvlous Fovndation of The Popedome: or a Familiar Conference between two friends to the truth, Philalethes and Orthologvs, shewing that it cannot be proved, That Peter was ever at Rome. Whervnto is added a Chronographicall Description of Paul's peregrinations, with Peter's travells, and the reasons why he could not be at Rome, that so the truth in one view may more fully and easily be seene of every one. At Oxford, Printed by John Lichfield and James Short, for William Spier, An. Dom. 1619. 4to. *** Dedicated to Dr Thomas Goodwin, Prideaux, and Benefield.

Looke beyond Luther: or an Answere to that Question so often and so insultingly proposed by our Adversaries, asking vs: Where this our Religion was before Luther's time? Whereto are added Sovnd Props to Beare vp honest-hearted Protestants, that they fall not from their sauing-faith. By Richard Bernard of Batcombe in Somerset. London, Imprinted by Felix Kyngston, and are to be sold by Edmund Weaver, at his shop at the great North doore of Pauls. 1623. 4to. *** The original Manuscript of this, with curious memoranda, is in my Library.

The Bible-Battells or The Sacred Art Military. For the rightly wageing of warre according to Holy Writ. Compiled for the vse of all such valiant Worthies and vertuously Valerous Souldiers, as vpon all iust occasions be ready to affront the Enemies of God, our King, and Country. By Ric. Bernard, Rector of Batcombe, Somersetshire. Printed for Edward Blackmore, and are to be sold by Iames Boler at the signe of the Flowre de Luce in Paule's Church-yard. 1629. 18mo.

Further: The second portion of the 'Seven Golden Candlesticks,' which is entitled 'The Great Mysterie of God's Mercie yet to Come,' is one earnest pleading in behalf of the Jews. This too, when to be a Jew was to be the butt of all scorn and insult. Very wistful and very eloquent, with the fine eloquence of emotion, is his setting forth of the claims of the 'children of Abraham.'

The third thing, wherein RICHARD BERNARD proved himself to be far in advance of his age, is found in one of his very best books, to wit the following: 'The Ready Way to Good Works, or a Treatise of Charitie, wherein, besides many other things, is shewed how we may be always ready and prepared, both in affection and action, to give cheerfully to the poor, and to pious uses, never heretofore published. By Richard Bernard, Rector of the parish of Batcombe in Somersetshire. London: Printed by Felyx Kyngston, and are to be sold by Edward Blackmore, at the signe of the Angell in Paul's Church-yard. 1635.' (12mo). The whole argumentation on this vital subject is to be found in this little-known volume. Its watchword is precisely that of our 'Systematic Benevolence Society,' and the like. Here is one sentence; '*Laying aside weekly every Lord's Day;* for the performance of which duty I did principally set my hand to this work.' We would commend the sections '*When* to lay aside,' '*How* to lay aside,' '*Certain objections*,' '*Quantity*,' to our readers. And we may be permitted very respectfully to suggest that our Societies, such as that just named, would go far toward the end they aim at, by a cheap reprint (worthily edited and annotated from similar early books, of which there are several) of this treatise. All praise to RICHARD BERNARD for the wisdom, the unction, the logical force, the pungent reproof, the awakening calls, the munificent consecration, of his masterly little book.

We pass now to his 'Isle of Man—Proceedings in Manshire.'* It were inexcusable not to furnish a specimen of this most original and picturesque, vivid and memorable treatise. In proceeding to submit this, however, we must testify that a careful perusal of the volume, in common with all the alleged sources of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' leaves John Bunyan's own averment, intact,

'Manner, and matter too, was all MINE OWN.'

The chief characteristics, merits and defects, of the book, are represented in what now follows. Marshalling the subjects of the 'Proceedings in Manshire,' he thus goes on:—

'Sin is the Thief and Robber; he stealeth our graces, spoileth us of every blessing, utterly undoeth us, and maketh miserable both body and soul. He is a murderer: spares no person, sex, or age; a strong thief: no human power can bind him; a subtle thief: he beguiled Adam, David, yea, even Paul. The only watchmen to spy him out is Godly-Jealousy. His resort is in Soul's Town, lodging in the heart. Sin is to be sought in the by-lanes, and in Sense, Thought, Word, and Deed Streets. The hue and cry is after fellows called Outside, who nod or sleep at Church, and, if awake, have their mind wandering: Sir Worldly Wise, a self-conceited earthworm; Sir Lukewarm, a Jack-on-both-sides; Sir Plausible Civil, Master Machiavel, a licentious fellow named Libertine; a snappish fellow, one Scrupulosity; and one Babbling Babylonian; these conceal the villain Sin. To escape, he pretends to be an honest man; calls vices by virtuous names; his relations, Ignorance, Error, Opinion, Idolatry, Subtilty, Custom, Forefathers, Sir Power, Sir Sampler, Sir Must-do, Sir Silly, Vain Hope, Presumption, Wilful, and Saintlike, all shelter and hide him. The Justice, Lord Jesus, issues his warrant—God's Word—to the Constable, Mr Illuminated Understanding, dwelling in Regeneration, aided by his wife Grace; his sons Will and Obedience, and his daughters, Faith, Hope, and Charity; with his men, Humility and Self-denial, and his maids, Temper-

* This appears to have been not only his most popular book, but one of the most popular of the age. We have seen a 12th and 13th edition within a brief period of publication. The last modern edition is this: 'Sin Apprehended, Tried and Condemned;' being the (*sic*) reprint of a book entitled, 'The Isle of Man.' By D. F. Jarman, B. A. (Nisbet, 1851.) This editor has the impertinence to abridge and change as it suits him; utter rubbish: Jarman not Bernard.

ance and Patience. Having got his warrant, he calls to aid his next neighbour, Godly Sorrow, with his seven sons, Care, Clearing, Indignation, Fear, Vehement Desire, Zeal, and Revenge: these are capable of apprehending the sturdiest thief. He goes to the common inn, an harlot's house called Mistress Heart, a receptacle for all villains and thieves, no dishonest person being denied house-room. Mistress Heart married her own father, an Old-man, keeping rest night and day, to prevent any godly motion from lodging there. The house has five doors, Hearing, Seeing, Tasting, Smelling, and Feeling. Eleven maids, impudent harlots, wait upon the guests, Love, Hatred, Desire, Detestation, Vain-hope, Despair, Fear, Audacity, Joy, Sorrow, and Anger, and a man-servant Will. The Dishes are the lusts of the flesh, served in the platter of pleasure; the lust of the eyes, in the plate of profit; and the pride of life. The drink is the pleasures of sin; their bedroom is natural corruption. "In this room lieth Mistress Heart, all her maids, her man, and all her guests together, like wild Irish." The bed is Impenitency, and the coverings Carnal Security; when the Constable enters, He attacks them all with "apprehensions of God's wrath," and carries them before the Judge, who examines the prisoners, and imprisons them until the assizes, in the custody of the jailor New Man. "If any prisoner breaks out, the sheriff—Religion—must bear the blame; saying, This is your religion, is it?" The keepers and fetters, as vows, fasting, prayer, &c., are described with the prison.'

The second part is the trial of the prisoner, and judgment without appeal:

'The commission is Conscience; the circuit, the Soul; the council for the king are Divine Reason and Quick-sightedness; the clerk, Memory; the witness, Godly Sorrow; the grand Jury, Holy Men, the inspired authors; the traverse jury, Faith, Love of God, Fear of God, Charity, Sincerity, Unity, Patience, Innocency, Chastity, Equity, Verity, and Contentation; all these are challenges by the prisoners, who would be tried by Nature, Doubting, Careless, &c., all freeholders of great means. This the Judge overrules; Old-man is put on his trial first, and David, Job, Isaiah, and Paul, are witnesses against him. He pleads, "There is no such thing as Original Corruption; Pelagius, a learned man, and all those now that are called Anabaptists, have hitherto, and yet do maintain that sin cometh by imitation, and not by inbred pravity. Good my lord, cast not away so old a man, for I am at this day 5569 years old." He is found guilty, and his sentence is: "Thou shalt be carried back to the place of execution, and there be cast off, with all thy deeds, and all thy members daily mortified and crucified, with all thy lusts, of every one that hath truly put on Christ." Mistress Heart is then tried; Moses (Gen. viii. 21), Jeremiah (xvii. 9), Ezekiel Matthew (xv. 9), and others, give evidence, and she is convicted, and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment under the jailor, New Man. All the rest of the prisoners are tried.'

This may suffice. It will be seen that there is much ingenuity, clever adaptation of Scripture names, and admirable 'keeping' throughout. No doubt the Impersonations are but as the 'dry bones' compared with Bunyan's 'living army' of Spirit-quickened, breathing, real flesh-and-blood actors, whom we mourn or rejoice with, smile, approve, disapprove, acquit, condemn. Still there is the same 'faculty,' if it be without the indefinable stamp of genius. The allusion to the Anabaptists is unworthy of Bernard. The 'Separatists,' or Nonconformists, who were so slandered, held and avowed the very doctrine he himself taught; none more articulately proclaimed alike the 'pravity' and depravity of man. It is painful to find these plague-spots in such a fine, quaint, rich, old book; and the only palliation (a poor one enough certainly) is that in the rebound from 'The Church' there were fragments of the 'Separation' who lifted up not only the anchors but went adrift and struck on the reefs of Error. But it was an unworthy trick to confound the 'Separatists' of Scrooby, and men like John Robinson and Henry Ainsworth, with such wanderers from 'the Truth.'*

The work now reprinted is perhaps as perfect an example of all Bernard's merits as any that could be selected. It is expository, doctrinal, practical, 'savoury,' and full of living appli-

* The literature of the Controversy is extensive. Besides the masterly 'Replies' of John Robinson, contained in his Works edited by Ashton, 3 vols. 12mo (vol. ii.), those wishing to get at the stand-point of 'the Separatists' would do well to study the following:—

1. Certayne Letters translated into English, being first written in Latine. Two by the reuerend and learned Mr Francis Iunius, Divinitie Reader at Leyden, in Holland. The other by the exiled English Church, abiding for the present at Amsterdam, in Holland. Together with the Confession of Faith prefixed, whereupon the said letters were first written. Isaiah liii. 1. Printed in the yeare 1602. 4to. Signed by F. Johnson, Ainsworth, &c.

cations to everyday experience and life. It abounds with apophthegms and compressed thoughts that cleave to the memory. It has hitherto been excessively rare and costly.

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

KINROSS.

2. Counterpoyson: Considerations touching the points in difference between the godly ministers and people of the Church of England, and the seduced brethren of the Separation. Arguments that the best assemblies of the present Church of England are true visible Churches. That the Preachers in the best assemblies of England are true Ministers of Christ. Mr Bernard's book intituled the Separatists Schisme. Mr Crashawe's Questions, propounded in his Sermon preached at the Crosse. Examined and answered by H. A. [*i. e.* Henry Ainsworth], Ao. Di. 1608. 4to. *** Name in full to 'Epistle to the Reader.'
3. A Defence of the Holy Scriptures, Worship, and Mysterie, used in the Christian Churches, separated from Anti-Christ, against the challenge, cavils, and contradictions of M. Smyth, in his book intituled, The differences of the Churches of the Separation! Hereunto are annexed a few observations upon some of M. Smythe's Censures, in his answer made to M. Bernard. By H. A. [*i. e.* Henry Ainsworth] of the English exiled Church in Amsterdam. Imprinted at Amsterdam, by Giles Thorp, in the yere 1609. 4to.
4. The Saint's Apologie, or A Vindication of the Churches, (which endeavour after a pure communion), from the odious names of Brownists and Separatists, in a letter sent to an eminent Divine of the Assembly, shewing that they separate not from true Churches, but keep themselves free from other men's sins. In repositing from the corruptions only which such Churches maintain in their externall communion, and from that yoke of bondage, which they subject themselves unto, under Prelates and humane Devices. London: Printed with order, by A. C. Anno MDC.XLIV. 4to. To the reader Signed 'Thos. S.'

☞ In the Bodleian Catalogue, and in that of Trinity College, Dublin, the following anonymous tractate is ascribed to our Bernard:—'A short View of the Prelaticall Church of England: Wherein is set forth the horrible abuses in Discipline and Government, layd open in tenne Sections, by way of Quære and Petition, the severall heads whereof are set downe in the next Page. Whereunto is added a short draught of Church government. Printed in the yeare MDCXLI.' 4to. It is simply impossible that Richard Bernard could have written this very able but unmeasured assault upon the Church of England. Let one brief extract suffice: 'The Church of England now so called, is the Church of our Prelates, and may be rightly termed the Prelatical or Hierarchical Church of England, received from Rome, the seat of anti-Christ, and set up here after the Protestants fell off from that Papal Church for its, framed of Prelates and also of prelatical Clergy, and only ruled by them. Quære, Whether any such Church was ever in the Apostles' days, or any time shortly after within 2 or 300 years? Whether any such Church be among any of the Reformed Churches; or anywhere else, but under the Pope, the Beast,' &c.?

There was a second edition of this tractate published the same year (1641), 'Newly corrected with additions.' The 'additions' consist chiefly of an address (one page), to 'the Honourable and High Court of Parliament.' This is a *bona fide* new edition; type different, and consists of forty-three pages, whereas the other has thirty-nine pages only. There was a third edition published in 1661, along with Vav. Powell's well-known 'Anatomy of the Prayer-Book' and other things. Probably the mistaken ascription of the authorship originated in this reprint, of which the title is as follows: 'A Short View of the Prelatical Church of England. Laid open in Ten Sections, by way of Quere and Petition to the High and Honourable Court of Parliament, the several Heads whereof are set down in the next two pages. Written a little before the fall of that Hierarchie, about the year 1641, by Iohn Barnard, sometimes Minister of Batcomb in Somersetshire: Whereunto is added, The Anatomy of the Common-Prayer. Printed in the year 1661.' 4to. It will be observed that name and surname are blundered, the former in all likelihood, because in his 'Bible Abstract and Epitome' (folio, 1642), usually bound up with the 'Thesaurus' his name is stupidly given, 'Pro Richardo *Barnardo*' Copies of the three editions are in Trinity College, Dublin: that of 1661 is P. kk. 59.

# ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

We embrace the present opportunity of correcting and supplementing one or two statements in our former Memoirs:—

1. Airay, p. xi, for 6th read 10th October, as the date of his death by our reckoning. Cf. p. xii.
2. King, p. ix, line 17 from top: It appears that this was the unrenowned father of *the* Ralph Cudworth, not the metaphysician himself, and that this was not *the* John Norton of New England, but one obscure.

   *Ibid.* p. xi, foot-note ‡. I gladly transfer from "Notes and Queries" the following communication from an accomplished correspondent:—

   "*Bishop King and Dr John Rainolds.*—Mr Grosart has just edited* for Mr Nichol's *Series of Commentaries*, the Lectures of Dr King on Jonah, and of Rainolds on Obadiah and Haggai. Biographical notices are prefixed to each. In the first, reference is made to the fiction which was circulated, affirming that Dr King had professed himself a Roman Catholic. Allow me to add a reference to those which Mr Grosart has given. Some account of the matter may be found in "The New Art of Lying, covered by Iesuits under the Vaile of Equivocation; discovered and disproved by Henry Mason, Parson of St Andrew's Vndershaft, London," 12mo, 1634, p. 206.

   "The same book also contains an interesting anecdote concerning Dr Rainolds (pp. 199–206). It appears that a stupid report was set afloat about Dr Rainolds; and to prepare against anything worse, his friends drew up for him a Confession of Faith, which he was too weak to write himself, but which he signed, and which was witnessed by nine persons, May 20. 1607. You may not wish to have the document, but here are the names: Henrie Airay, vice-chancellor; Henry Wilkinson, Edward Bilston, Richard Taylor, Henrie Hindle, Daniel Fairclough, Henrie Mason, Alexander Hord, and Iohn Dewhurst."

   Mr Mason adds that he was in possession of the original, from which he makes "a faithful transcript." Of this Henry Mason I have no further information, except what Wood says in Athen. Oxon. II. 56, ed. 1691. B. H. C. (January 28. 1865, 3d S. VII.). It were easy to supplement concerning this Worthy, Henry Mason, than whom there are few of our old writers more racy and quickening. It may suffice to add that he was chaplain to Bishop King, that he died in 1647, and to refer to Dr Bliss's A. O. III. 219, 220, and Fasti, *sub nomine.*

   A. B. G.

* A mistake: I am only responsible for the Memoirs. The Rev. Thomas Smith, M.A., Edinburgh, is the alone Editor of this Series, as he is the 'General Editor' of the Series of Puritan Divines, in which only Sibbes, thus far, has been edited by me.—G.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND VERY VIRTUOUS LADY,

# THE LADY FRANCIS,

## COUNTESS OF WARWICK, DOWAGER,

The increase of all saving graces, and the fruition of that eternal bliss with the saints in glory, is heartily wished.

RIGHT Honourable Lady,—Though a woman was the mother of all man's misery, yet of a woman came salvation, to bring us out of that estate unto grace and glory; and for women's comfort, God of his mercy hath been pleased to make their sex renowned in many examples. To some he hath given supernatural knowledge, by enduing them with the spirit of prophecy, as Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Anna. Upon other some he hath bestowed singular wisdom, as upon the woman of Tekoah, and the wise woman of Abel in Bethmaacah. Rare was the faith of many, as the faith of Sarah, of Rahab, of the widow of Sarepta, and of the Canaanitish woman; who have put on better resolutions, and greater courage for the church in the time of peril, than some men have done. Did not Deborah encourage Barak to the wars, adventuring herself with him, when otherwise he without her was afraid to go? Did not Jael, the wife of Heber, kill the great captain and general Sisera? And who more resolved to jeopard her life for God's people then beautiful Esther, with her *If I perish, I perish?*

Have there not been of them famous in many other things? For attention to the word, as the virgin Mary and Lydia; for going far for knowledge, as the queen of Sheba, to hear the wisdom of Solomon; for works of charity, as Dorcas; for works of piety, helping forward the building of the tabernacle, as were many women, Exod. xxxv. 21, 22, 29; for fervency in prayer, as Hannah; for daily devotion in fasting and prayer, as Anna; for entertainment of God's messengers, as the Shunamite, as Lydia, and one Mary, Rom. xvi. 6; for the fear of God, as the midwives of Egypt; for courtesy to a mere stranger, as Rebekah; for humility and patience, as old Naomi. Who can outstrip Ruth in love? Are there not recorded not mean ones only, but also honourable personages for religion and grace? as we may read in the Acts xvii. 4, 12. Will a Dionysius become a believer in an university from among the Athenians? You shall find a Damaris to second him.

In what have men been renowned, wherein some women (according, yea, and beyond the nature of their sex) have not been remarkable? In wisdom, faith, charity, love of the word, love of God's messengers, fervent affection, and desire of heavenly things? If men have suffered imprisonment, cruel persecution, and bands for Christ, were women behind? No, verily, Acts viii. 3, and ix. 2.

Nay, have they not in somewhat excelled men sometimes? Who entertained Christ so much and so often as Martha and Mary? Who are noted to contribute to Christ's necessities but women? Luke viii. 3. Who (saving John the apostle) followed Christ to his cross, lamenting and weeping, but women? Who of all the ordinary followers of Christ observed where Christ was buried but women? Luke xxiv. 24. Who first went to his sepulchre with sweet spices to anoint Christ's body but women? Mark xvi. 1, 2. We may read of a congregation of women, to whom St Paul preached, being gathered together to the accustomed place of prayer, Acts xvi. 13, as more forward as it may seem at that time than men.

It would be tedious to repeat by name all the notable women in the holy Scriptures, and their excellent graces; yet can I not let pass Priscilla her knowledge, with her husband Aquila in the ministry of the gospel, able to teach an eloquent Apollos; nor Lois and Eunice, trainers up of the famous evangelist Timothy in the holy Scriptures; nor Persis, Philip. iv. 3, which laboured much in the Lord, as many other women did. Not to stand upon more instances, one thing for their more worthy praises is to be observed, and not to be forgotten; I have read of men well-esteemed of to have been apostates, as Demas, Alexander, Phyletus, and others, but of never a woman

by name, once reckoned among the saints in all the New Testament. This is singular glory.

But the Lord hath not thought it enough to honour women thus, by endowing them with excellent gifts, and by their praiseworthy works, but also he hath graced them otherwise. To whom did Christ first manifest himself after his resurrection, but unto women? Of what act did ever Christ so speak, to make it perpetually famous, as that of the woman, Mat. xxvi. 7, 17, that poured upon him an alabaster box of ointment, promising that wheresoever the gospel should be preached in the whole world, there should her work be remembered? Hath not also the Lord directed his penmen, and by name his beloved apostle, to write an epistle unto an 'elect lady'? And are there not whole books of Scripture dedicated to their names, as this of Ruth, and the other of Esther, for an eternal remembrance of them?

I hope, Right Honourable Lady, therefore, that I may be bold to present your Honour with this my *Commentary upon Ruth*, which you may challenge of right before all others, for your bountiful and liberal contribution towards my maintenance in the university of Cambridge, by the which I am now that I am; and for which, as also for your Honour's ever-continuing favours to me and mine, I remain everlastingly a debtor.

Accept, therefore, I humbly beseech your Honour, this my best testimony of all dutiful services, and of the acknowledgment of my most thankful remembrance of the same. And my hearty and daily prayer is, that the Lord would bless your Honour, that as both you have intended and also begun good works, so you may go on with increase therein to the end; it being the greatest honour before God and men, to be great and rich in good works, for which you shall have, for the present, many people's prayers; for the time to come, of mindful posterities, also great praises; and withal in heaven (which is the best of all) reward with God, who ever preserve your Honour in all happy peace and prosperity!

Your Honour's ever bounden to be commanded,

RICHARD BERNARD.

BATCOMBE, March 22.

# RUTH'S RECOMPENCE:

OR,

# A COMMENTARY UPON THE BOOK OF RUTH.

*THE book of Ruth.* This is the title of this part of Scripture; and hereby is shewed of whom it chiefly entreateth: even of Ruth, the virtuous and godly young woman and widow, a heathen and idolater by her country and birth, but by the Lord's call a gracious saint at length, a mother in Israel, and one of whom Christ came. The titles of the books of holy writ, shew either the principal matter thereof, as *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, and many other; or who were the penmen, as the books of *Samuel*, *Ezra*; or what person chiefly is there spoken of, as *Job*, *Esther*, *Nehemiah*, and *Ruth* here; who, though but a woman, and of that weak sex, yet being truly religious, see how the Lord doth her honour to all posterities: a singular encouragement unto virtue and godliness.

Who penned this, is not certain; but certain it is by the genealogy, chap. iv. 18, 22, that the scribe lived in David's time, and therefore is it held to be Samuel's by some. But it is not necessary ever to know the penners of every book of Scripture, especially of historical and dogmatical, whose truth and authority depend not upon the writer or speaker, as prophetical books do, but upon the verity of the things spoken and written. The scribe's name is concealed; the Lord's pleasure was not to have it mentioned, and therefore after hidden things we will not make further inquiry, especially in a matter of no more moment.

The book is divided into four chapters, being, as it were, the parts of the book: the first sheweth Ruth's journeying to Judah, with the occasions thereto, and causes thereof; the second, her entertainment and her carriage and pains there; the third, her contract with Boaz, a nobleman of Bethlehem, and how it was procured; and the fourth, her solemn marriage, with the joyful issue thereof.

## CHAPTER I.

THIS chapter telleth us how Ruth came to Bethlehem, who, being married to a man's son of Judah, in her own country, for the grace of religion in her heart, and the love she bare to her mother-in-law, after the death of her husband and father-in-law, forsook her people, country, and idolatry, and went into the land of Judah, to dwell with God's people, and came thither with her mother-in-law, in the beginning of barley harvest.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land; and a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.*

This verse is an entrance into the story, and is the description of a journey; and therein note, when, upon what occasion, from whence, whither, and who took it in hand, and with what company he finished it.

*And it came to pass.* To wit, by the hand and providence of God. Thus he beginneth this history, to note a special hand of God in all this business, beyond man's purpose and thought, in bringing a famine, and in Elimelech's going into Moab, to take a wife for his son, even this Ruth, to make her a mother in Israel. And therefore are we diligently to mark the providence of God in reading this story.

*In the days when the judges ruled.* This telleth us when this happened. In historical narrations, the time

with other circumstances are set down for more credit to the story, Judges i. 1, 2 Sam. i. 1, 1 Kings i. 1. As in human stories this is observed, so here in divine. Thus God in mercy descendeth to us, for the better confirmation of our weak faith, for which he is to be praised. We may note out of these words,

I. That the Israelites were ever under government, under Moses, Joshua, the judges, and then kings. This was needful to prevent disorder and confusion of state, when men are not under rule and government; for then will every one do what he listeth, Judges xviii. xx., which condemneth anarchy and all loose liberty, destruction to church and commonwealth.

II. That their government was first by judges, that they might see the Lord's extraordinary hand in this governing of them,* 1 Sam. viii. 6, 7, and that they might not be as other nations, 1 Sam. viii. 5, nor in bondage, 1 Sam. viii. 9, 18. These judges were raised up for the most part extraordinarily, to shew more fully the Lord's care of his people. They were worthy and excellent men; not all of the same tribe and family, but sometimes of one, then of another; they ruled not by tyranny, or the advice of man, but by the counsel and guidance of God; they loaded not the people with heavy burdens to maintain great state. In their days they sought the welfare of the people, the glory of God; not their own wills and pleasures, to rule after their own lusts. They would not reign themselves, but the Lord, as Gideon said, Judges viii. 23, should reign over the people. Thus happily did the Lord provide for his people, till they did shake off his yoke, and brought themselves into bondage. For so it falleth out, if men like not of God's choice, he leaveth them to their own, of which they shall be sure to repent.

III. That such as be set over a people are to rule them, but yet in judgment; for the Hebrew word translated *ruled*, is *judged*, and rulers were to judge, 1 Sam. vii. 15. And this must they do, even labour wisely to rule and govern in judgment. They are to rule, to maintain their authority, which else will lie through contempt in the dust; and they must do it in judgment, that equity may be upheld, and nothing be done rashly, partially, and to the hurt of innocency.

*That there was a famine.* This might happen many ways: by the incursion of foreign enemies, by civil wars among themselves, or by restraint of seasonable showers from heaven. Howsoever it came, sin was the cause thereof; for we may read in the time of these judges, howsoever they themselves did valiantly and right worthily in Israel, yet the people would run into many mischiefs, so as we by searching may find these evils among them: a toleration of idolaters and public monuments of idolatry, Judges i. 21, 27, 29, 30, and iii. 5 and ii. 2, contrary to God's express commandment by the hand of Moses. They fell themselves unto idolatry, chap. ii. 11, 12, 13, 17, and viii. 27; for but tolerate it in others first, then we like it at length in ourselves, as many examples witness. They would defend it, and that with bloodshed, chap. vi. 30, for idolaters are of a murderous disposition, as their god-devil is whom they worship, as Manasseh, Joash, Jehoram, and other kings do manifestly declare, and as we have experimentally found at the hands of papists. See here a toleration first, then an approbation, then an open defence of an idolatrous worship; and when this is once on foot, what darkness doth not overspread! They did what themselves listed, chap. xvii. 6, and xviii. 1, and xxi. 25. They fell to adultery and filthy Sodomitry, chap. xix. Thus they forgot the Lord's mercies, and therefore he severely punished them, as the story of the Judges shew, in giving them into the hands of their enemies, grievously to oppress them, and here by famine to plague them. From whence we may observe,

I. That sins, especially these aforenamed, deserve the judgments of God, Deut. xxviii., 1 Kings viii. 35, 36, 37, because sins provoke and incense the wrathful indignation of the Lord against men, as appeareth by his terrible threatenings, Ps. xi. 6, Rom. ii., and his inflicted punishments upon evil-doers, of which there want not examples in the Scripture: as the old world, Sodom, Israelites, in wilderness, in Canaan; and therefore to escape plagues, let us take heed of sin, Ezek. xviii. 31, Rev. xviii.

II. That famine and dearth is a punishment for sin, and that a great plague, Ezek. v. 16; Deut. xxviii. 23, 24; Lev. xxvi. 19, 20; Amos iv.; therefore to avoid it, either prevent sin, that it be not committed; or if we be overtaken, repent of sin, and that sincerely and speedily. And when this hand of God cometh upon us, let us search our ways, and let us humble ourselves, 2 Chron. vii. 14, that the Lord may heal our land, for it is a terrible judgment, 1 Sam. xxiv. 14, and without mercy, 2 Kings vi. 10, 29, Ezek. iv. 10. This famine men do know; yet there is another famine which few know, or if they know it, they fear it not, the 'famine of the word,' Amos viii. 11, which the Lord threateneth by that prophet, as a greater plague than the famine of bread and water, the food of the body; and yet, alas, who feareth it? who are touched with the terror of this plague?

III. We may hereby see how God made his word good upon them, and that he dallieth not with his people, in denouncing judgments against them; for Moses had told them, Deut. xxviii., that God would thus afflict them, if they would be rebellious against him: and here the story telleth us, that in the days of the judges this famine came upon them. This Ezekiel verifieth in chap. vi. 10; and the punishments inflicted, as the Lord denounced them, shew the truth hereof, that the Lord speaketh seriously. He doth not jest with sinners; he will certainly make good upon them what he threateneth, as may be seen upon Jezebel, Eli's sons, and upon his house, upon Jeroboam, Joachim, Zedekiah, and on Jerusalem. For the Lord is

* Josephus in Antiq. lib. iv. cap. 8.—*De Aristocratia.*

the God that hateth iniquity, and is just in his word, even the God of truth, as well in threats as in promises. And therefore let us fear the lion's roaring, and not be like him that blesseth himself, and dreadeth not the curse, Deut. xxix. 18, but presumeth of mercy, as if God were not also just to punish offenders. But such must know they deceive themselves, they harden their own hearts, they abuse God's mercy, which is to work fear, Ps. cxxx. 4, Jer. xxx. iii. 9, and obedience, Rom. xii. 1. They spoil God of his justice and truth in his threats, and incense the Lord's wrath to plague them in a high degree, as he threateneth in Deut. xxix. 19.

*In the land.* In the land of Canaan, the kingdom of Israel, where God had placed them, planted them, and promised to them his blessings plentifully. Yet see now, for their sins, in a land once flowing with milk and honey, Ezek. xx. 6, they find scarcity. Hence note,

I. That people deprive themselves, by their sins, of that which God had given, and they enjoyed, according to his promise. For sin will deprive angels of heaven, Adam of paradise, Cain of his honour, Reuben of his birthright, thousands of the land of Canaan, though they came out of Egypt; Jerusalem of her kings, her temple, peace and prosperity; men of their honours, as Jeroboam, Haman; of their liberty, as Manasseh; of health, as Uzziah; of their lives, as Korah with his company. Let us then blame ourselves for our miseries, and not the Lord, for punishing us as we deserve; and if we would hold the blessings which we do enjoy, beware of sin, which will rob us of all we have.

II. That a fruitful land is made barren for the sins of the inhabitants thereof, Ps. cvii., Lev. xxvi. 19, 20. And these sins in particular procure this plague: the abuse of God's mercies, Luke xv. 14; idolatry, 1 Kings xvii. 1, 2 Kings iv. 36; the murdering of innocents, 2 Sam. xxi. 1; and the oppression of the poor, Amos iv. 1, 6. Know, then, how to prevent hereby scarcity, and in the time of want turn from sin by repentance, and blame not the heavens or earth; murmur not against unseasonable weather, but be displeased with our sinful selves.

III. Judgment begins at the house of the Lord, 1 Peter iv., Ezek. ix. He will shew his hatred of sin upon the land of the living, for he cannot suffer evil in his people; if a Moses, an Aaron, a David, a Josiah sin, they shall feel the smart of it. Now therefore, if judgment begin at God's house, what shall become of God's enemies? If the church feel wrath, what may the adversaries expect?

*A certain man of Bethlehem-Judah.* Judah, the royal tribe. And this is added for distinction, because there was another Bethlehem in Zebulun, Joshua xix. 15. This Bethlehem was called Ephrata, Gen. xxxv. 13, six miles from Jerusalem, as some say. Here Jacob fed his sheep, Gen. xxxi.; here Rachel died, David was born, and Jesus Christ our Lord. It had the name from plenty, and signifieth the *house of bread.* So as we see the noble tribe of Judah, and this honourable place of Bethlehem, felt this scourge of God. No place is exempt from the punishment where sin is suffered to reign; it bringeth famine upon Bethlehem-Judah, and on the land of Israel; it bringeth the sword and famine into Jerusalem. There is then no place to keep us free from feeling the punishment, if sin be not removed; chase out this, and call home again the Lord's blessings.

*Went to sojourn.* As a stranger, in another country, from his own home. We here see how God can remove by one means or another men out of their homes and harbour: David, through just fear of Absalom, out of Jerusalem; Manasseh, by force, out of his kingdom into prison; others, by unthriftiness, cast out themselves; some voluntarily leave their habitation and place of abode, and return not again; all which came about by the hand of God, who hath all things at his disposing, that no man may think himself securely settled, especially if he be a Shebnah, Isa. xxii. 15–17; the Lord will drive such out, Amos iv. 2, 3. Note again, how fear of corporal wants will make men leave their home, their native soil, their friends and kindred, to go into a strange country: so forcible is nature for preservation of bodily life, which man so much esteemeth and loveth. This should then make men care to keep the blessings providently and frugally, also to avoid the occasions and means of wasteful misspending, seeing fear of want will thus work. And if the love of corporal life be so forcible, how much more the love of eternal life, for which we should be willing to forsake all! But, alas, the least worldly gain or carnal pleasure banisheth this love out of many men's hearts, who rather follow here Elimelech, to leave the people of God to go into Moab for the world, than Abraham, to forsake his country at the commandment of God.

*In the country of Moab.* This Moab was inhabited by those which came of Lot's eldest son, incestuously begotten, Gen. xix. 37. Of this was Balak king, who hired Balaam to curse Israel, Num. xxii. 6; who committed fornication with the daughters thereof, to the destruction of thousands. Over this land reigned Eglon, who smote Israel, and possessed some part of the land, and kept them in bondage eighteen years, Judges iii. 12–14. Some think that Elimelech journeyed to Moab in his days. Howsoever, by this we may learn that wicked idolaters may have sometimes plenty when the people of God are in want. Here Moab had plenty when Israel was under a famine. Of the prosperity of the wicked, read Ps. lxxiii. 4, and xvii. 14, and xxxvii. 15, Job xxi. 7, 13; and of the troubles of the godly, Heb. xi. 37. And this cometh to pass because the wicked are at home here; here their heaven and time of rejoicing. But the godly are not here at home; the Lord looketh for their coming to him, and therefore prepareth them by

crosses; he loveth them, and therefore doth he correct them, that they might not be damned. Hence, then, it followeth that we are not to judge men's spiritual estates by outward prosperity or adversity, for the wicked have the greatest portion of the things of this life; see it in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Why do men then bless themselves for their wealth and honour, and despise their poor brethren, in a far better estate before God than they?

*Quest.* Whether did Elimelech well to go from Bethlehem into such an idolatrous country?

*Ans.* It may seem not, because he went of distrust rather than of present want, verse 21, and for that he left the place of God's true worship, and where the Lord promised his blessing, Canaan also being a type of the kingdom of heaven, to go among the wicked idolaters, whom the Lord by name also had forbidden to be received unto his people, Deut. xxiii. 3, Neh. xiii. 1. Further, hereby he could not but endanger his family to be defiled by idolatry, if the Lord had not been more merciful. And to conclude this, we see how the Lord's taking both him and his sons away may somewhat persuade that he did not well, seeing the Lord suffered him not to return home again. True it is that David went out of Judah unto idolaters for fear of Saul, but it was against his will, and with much sorrow of heart. Abraham he travelled into Egypt, but it was at God's bidding, and the Shunamite might by the prophet's warrant go into some place out of Israel to prevent the misery of famine, 2 Kings viii. 1, 2. But what is this to such as have no such warrant, but such moving causes as here?

*He, and his wife, and his two sons.* This is praiseworthy in him, for an honest man careth for his wife and children as well as for himself. Abraham took his wife with him into Egypt, Gen. xii. 18; Jacob, all his with him, Gen. xlii.; for the wife is as himself, Gen. ii., and so to be loved, Eph. v., and the children are bone of his bone. Reason and nature tied Elimelech to this, an example of a loving husband and of a natural parent to be imitated, and which condemneth those which run away from wife and children, and are worse than infidels, 1 Tim. v. 8, yea, than the brute beasts. This man led them, they followed him; so wives and children are to be companions with their husbands and parents in adversity. Sarah will follow Abraham, Rachel and Leah Jacob, from their country and father's house; and Mary, the mother of Jesus, will follow Joseph; for the husband is the head, and bond of law bindeth them thereto, which checketh the contrary, if husbands and parents do command to be followed and obeyed in things lawful. If Elimelech, as it may seem, did not well to go, it may be questioned whether these did well to follow him? He might do amiss, and not they, being under his government, so long as he led them not to do evil, and to commit idolatry, but for sustentation of life, and in that country where they were not outwardly compelled to idolatry, but might serve God as they had learned at home. If any think otherwise, either of Elimelech's going or of his company, I contend not.

Ver. 2. *And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah: and they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.*

The historiographer goeth on with the former narration of the journeying, first expressing by name the man, the wife, and the sons, shewing plainly who they were; then the finishing of their journey; and thirdly, their abode there. Into these three things this verse divideth itself, the declaration of their persons, what they were called, both in respect of their names and place whence they came, the perfecting of their journey, and their stay there.

*And the name of the man was Elimelech.* By naming the parties, and not speaking in general, as before, the Holy Ghost would have notice taken of them, the better either to see their graces or to discern their wants, and so to have a more certain knowledge what to follow or what to take heed of; for the knowledge of persons maketh the things which they do either more or less apparent to us. Elimelech signifieth *the Lord my King*, a man well descended. He was of the chiefest tribe, to wit, of Judah, a nigh kinsman unto Boaz the lord of Bethlehem, and one of note, as appeareth by the article in the Hebrew, and in the Greek Septuagint also, as likewise by the notice taken of Naomi his wife at her return, ver. 19; yea, he went out of Judah without want, as may be noted from verse 21, and as learned men from thence do collect. And if so, his going away was more of fear to want than present necessity, which sheweth his great weakness, worthy reproof. See here a man well born, of good means, of good note, and carrying a name of trust in God, yet slipped through distrust of God's providence, and too much relying upon his own devised course, which yet failed him in the end. Great birth, good means, high name and fame, save not from falling either into sin or outward misery, if a better blessing than all these be not given men from God, and therefore not to rest upon them.

*And the name of his wife Naomi.* Whose daughter this was the Scripture recordeth not; her name signifieth *my pleasantness* or *sweetness*, as wives should be such to their husbands, and so husbands should account them. She was fair, a wise woman, of great note in the city, and a very godly and meek-spirited woman, full of true love, patient in want, thankful and humble, all which, to be true, her words and deeds in this history do plainly shew. So she was fair inward and outward, an example and looking-glass for women, the gallant dames which would be Naomis for outward beauty and bravery, but are foul Marahs for

want of grace and true goodness. Naomi is named before her children, both in the former, as a wife to Elimelech, and here as a mother to them; and this reckoning of her name in this order declareth her dignity and place before them. She, as a wife, is to have place next Elimelech the husband, who is to prefer wife before children, for she is himself, and as a mother to go before them that be her children, who are to honour their parents.

*And the name of his two sons.* Why not *her* sons, for she was not their mother-in-law, but they were sons born of her body? verse 11. But they are called his for the more honour, for the father chiefly giveth honour to the child.

*Mahlon and Chilion.* The former signifieth *infirmity*, the latter *finished*. Why so called is not shewed, but they answer the event of things: the first, his father's infirmity in going from among God's people to live with idolaters for preservation of his outward estate; and the other, his father's death, being taken away in Moab, verse 3. He was *Mahlon* in his leaving of Bethlehem, and *Chilion* in abiding in Moab. And here note in all these names how significant they be, which the Hebrews did ever observe in naming their children, yea, the Lord himself in giving a name to any one, as in calling Abram *Abraham*, Sarai *Sarah*, which is of us to be imitated, thereby expressing our faith and grace towards God, and admonishing them of some duty. True it is that good names have no virtue in them to make men better, nor names without signification to make any worse; yet for reverence to our holy profession, and that blessed sacrament of baptism, at which time names be given, and in imitation of the godly in Scripture, yea, of God himself, who called his first son of men *Adam*, and his blessed holy one *Jesus*, by the message of an angel, let us give our children good names, significant and comely, not absurd, ridiculous, and impious, as some have done, out of the spirit of profaneness.

*Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah.* So termed, because Bethlehem was called Ephrata, Gen. xxxv. 19, or for that the country where Bethlehem stood was so called, as may appear in Micah v. 2; and Judah is added, not only for a distinction of this Bethlehem, from the other in Zebulun, but for to make a difference of the Ephrathites here from other in the tribe of Ephraim; for Jeroboam is called an Ephrathite, 1 Kings xi. 26. By which we see how careful the Holy Ghost is to make clear the history, and to free it from ambiguity of speech, that the truth might better appear, and not be mistaken. The penmen of this and other divine histories are faithful historians; and such should others be, and not full of fables, falsehood, and deceit, written through fear, or favour, or ill-will.

*And they came into the country of Moab.* So they finished their journey. Howsoever the man might do amiss in leaving Israel for Moab, the land of the living for a dead nation, yet it pleased the Lord to speed his journey, to bring to pass what he had intended for the conversion of Ruth, to make her a mother in Israel. Whence we see, that God, intending good to some, in his secret counsel, may prosper that which others undertake with no good warrant. Thus shall Nebuchadnezzar prosper against Jerusalem; Jacob's sons act in selling Joseph their brother; yea, the enemies of Christ to put him to death, as God had determined, Acts iv.; for the Lord can work good out of evil, and can use ill instruments to good purposes. And therefore simply for the good issue which God maketh, we are not to approve of either the matter in hand, or the minds of men which God useth therein, as is apparent in the former examples; for God's will and work was one thing, but theirs another; he is to be praised, but they are to be reproved. The word *country* may be also translated the *field*, as in the original it is often used, שדה, Gen. ii. 5, Num. xx. 17, Prov. xxiv. 3; Septuagint, εἰς ἀγρὸν; and hence some conjecture that Elimelech went not into the cities of the Moabites, but dwelt in tents, as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and not in the cities of the Canaanites. If men live where idolaters be, it is good to avoid the occasion of infection as much as may be; for much conversing breedeth familiarity; this, love of their persons, and so a liking of their ways, with neglect of true religion at the first, but it falleth into contempt at last. It is rare to be a righteous-hearted Lot in Sodom; he was but one, and one alone. Israelites became idolaters in Egypt. This is it which made the Lord forbid communion and marriages to them with the Canaanites, lest they should learn their ways. Let us therefore take heed of conversing with the wicked, and with idolatrous people. It is good that idle travellers should consider well hereof.

*And continued there.* So then they had no repulse, but were allowed to dwell there, and that for a long time, as the words in ver. 4 do shew; yet these Moabites were formerly hard-hearted enough, Deut. xxiii. 3. But by this we see that none are so churlish and unkind at one time to some, but God can incline their hearts at another time to other some. The history of heathen emperors manifesteth the truth of this towards Christians, and the story of the Israelites coming forth of Egypt; for men's hearts, yea, the hearts of kings, are in the Lord's hands, to turn them towards whom he pleaseth, as Nehemiah knew well, which made him to pray, Neh. i.; and Jacob also, when he feared the coming of Esau. When we have to do with ill and dogged-natured men, let us go to God, who can turn Esau's bloody heart, in his coming forth, into a kind welcoming of his brother at their meeting; he can incline Ahasuerus's heart towards Esther, to make him hold out to her the golden sceptre. Consider the promise, Jer. xv. 11, and xlii. 12, and let us seek to please God, and he will work

us favour in the eyes of men, Prov. xvi. 7 and Job v. 23; let this be our comfort. It may further seem, by the course of this story, that these Bethlehemites were not only suffered to dwell among the Moabites, but also that they were kindly used, in that they would be content to marry with them, which is a commendation to them, that would thus welcome such as came among them for succour. It is a matter praiseworthy to be harboursome to strangers. For this were the barbarians commended, Acts xxviii. 2, 7, 10, who received the apostle and the rest into their houses, made them fires because of the cold and rain in winter, courteously lodged them, and when they departed, being such as had suffered shipwreck, and were thereby in want, those barbarians helped them with necessaries. This was humanity and mercy; for this Abraham, and Lot, and Job are commended; and this goodness we must learn to practise, for so are we exhorted, Heb. xiii. 2; and these former examples lead us to it. This duty is to be done, not only to our kindred, to our friends, to our known countrymen, but to strangers, Heb. xiii. 2; yea, and to our enemies in their need, 2 Kings vi. 23, Rom. xii. 20.

Ver. 3. *And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons.*

This telleth us of the heavy cross which befell Naomi, which was in the death of her husband, and that, as it may seem, very shortly after they were come into Moab, before the sons did marry; so she was left a widow with two fatherless children, to take care for them in a strange country. This verse is a narration of an event, what it was, and upon whom it fell to the great heaviness of Naomi. The event was death, and here is shewed whom it took, and whom it left.

*And Elimelech died.* His age is not reckoned. He could not be very old, if we may guess his years by his sons marrying so young women after his death; yet he dieth, yea, and there also, whither he went for food to preserve life. He went first from Israel, the land of the living, and led them thence, and so he now goeth out of the world before them; from whence note,

I. That death is the end of all, and it spareth none, Josh. xxiii. 14, Job xxi. 33, Eccles. vii. 2, and vi. 6, 1 Cor. xv. 51, Heb. ix. 27; 'for all have sinned,' Rom. v.; and 'death is the reward of sin,' Rom. vi.; and therefore let all prepare to die.

II. That a full supply of bodily wants cannot prevent death. The man must die in Moab, where was food enough; the rich glutton must die also, and the rich man with his barn full, for the sentence of death is irrevocable, and man's life dependeth not upon the outward means of life, for then the rich and mighty would never die.

Let not men in their abundance think to escape death; let them therefore not set their hearts on their wealth, for they must leave it. It is folly to trust in riches, for they cannot deliver from death, either ordinary or extraordinary, lingering or sudden, natural or violent, as examples and experience itself teacheth.

III. That where men think to preserve life, there they may lose it, as Elimelech doth here, fleeing from the famine in Israel, yet died where plenty was, in Moab; for no place is free from death, and when the time appointed is come, man cannot pass it, Job xiv. 5. We cannot think therefore ourselves safe anywhere from death; nay, many times where we may think ourselves secure, there death may take us away.

*Naomi's husband.* It is not said *her* husband, which might well have been spoken by way of relation to her, without her name, because she was named before, and no other woman. But this woman was a very virtuous woman, and this was a great cross to her, and therefore, both to express her excellency, and her begun misery, it is said, '*Naomi's* husband died,' the husband of so rare a wife died. Note hence,

I. That it is a grace for some to be called the husbands of some women; their name is a grace to them, if they be virtuous; for such a one is 'a crown to her husband,' Prov. xii. 4. Now a crown is high glory to a man, and 'her husband is known in the gates,' Prov. xxxi. 23. Such wives are to be made much of, as rare birds; for too many may sit down with shame and blush to be named the husbands of some wives. Foolish, though fair; fair, but perhaps filthy; rich but withal retchless; wives, but without government; husbands, named the head, but they must be masters; sometime painful, but peacock-like proud; often more mad, or sullen sad, than merry; if merry, it keeps not in with modesty; if she speak, it is loud, often heard farther than seen, and yet oftener seen by a quiet husband than well liked of. In a word, a wicked foolish woman is 'shame to his person, and rottenness to his bones,' Prov. xii. 4.

II. That grace in one prevents not death in another. Naomi's husband must die, so Abraham's wife also; Jacob must bid his Rachel adieu, and Ezekiel the desire of eyes, Ezek. xxiv. 16; for no man's grace can free himself, much less another, from death, Ps. xlix. 7, 9, and married persons are not appointed the same length of days. No; we come not together, and we go not together. Let none hope for life by the grace of another; let the nearest and dearest look to part by death. Ruth loved Naomi most dearly, and saith that nothing should separate them but only death, ver. 17, because she knew that that must needs be yielded unto.

III. That it is a great cross for a woman to lose a good husband. This is implied, as I said, in naming her by name; for in him the wife loseth her head, her guide, her stay, and comfort, if he be a virtuous man, and a good husband. I need not entreat good and loving wives to mourn for such; sure enough they have cause, and wives cannot but mourn, except they conceit a new comfort very quickly, as some do, for

fear the old grief should lie too long at the heart for him that is dead, and cannot be recalled. So with them, the living is better to be liked of than the dead, for they know their husbands would, perhaps, have so dealt with them.

*And she was left, and her two sons.* Death seized only upon Elimelech, and left Naomi and also her sons, that she might not be utterly comfortless in a strange country. From this may we note these two things:

I. That albeit death is due to all (inasmuch as all have sinned), yet it seizeth not upon all at once; but one dieth now, and another hereafter, as we see in all ages, which cometh not to pass for any good in one more than in another. But God will have mankind upon earth till the last day; he forbeareth some, and reprieveth them for their amendment; for the lengthening of life is for our further repentance, if we be the Lord's, or for the greater condemnation of such as shall perish. For this mercy God is to be praised, for we deserve death; and it might seize upon every one at once, and take us away, because we are born in sin, brought up therein, and none so free ever, but in his highest pitch of well-doing he may be tainted of sin, 1 John i.

II. That the Lord, in afflicting his children, sweeteneth the same with some comforts. He wholly leaveth not them without some taste of his mercy and goodness, as we may see in his dealing with Naomi. He took away her husband, and left two sons, and after took them away, but gave her an excellent daughter-in-law. Elisha had an earthly power coming against him, 2 Kings vi. 10, but he then saw a great help from heaven. It was a bitter affliction for Joseph to be sold of his brethren, but it was sweetened with Potiphar's favour; this at length imprisoned him unjustly, but the Lord gave him favour in the eyes of the keeper of the prison, to sugar this bitter pill with. And this the Lord doth in mercy, that his children might not be overwhelmed with grief, and swallowed up of sorrow; therefore by one means he casts them down, but by another sustaineth them. Let not therefore men, which fear God, be over sad when afflictions come; God will lay no more than they can bear; he layeth on them a burden, but he putteth under his hand. If we look upon the affliction, let us also consider what cause of comfort we have; mark when, for what, how long or short, what it is allayed with, that we be not wholly cast down.

Ver. 4. *And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years.*

This sheweth what course the sons took after their father's death; they returned not home. This cross brought them not to think of leaving that idolatrous country, but they settled themselves to marry there, so as this verse telleth us of two things: the first is of a marriage, and herein who they were, the men, Elimelech's sons; the women, who are set out by their country, then by their names; the second is of their abode in Moab, and time how long.

Note (before I come to the words) that every cross bringeth not men home again; their father's death made them not resolve to go back unto God's people again. Lot was taken prisoner, yet would he still abide in Sodom after his deliverance. Jehoshaphat's danger with Ahab made him not wholly to forsake that house; but he must have more afflictions, and the prophet openly to rebuke him. And this cometh for want of weighing the true cause of afflictions, when they happen, or desire to please other, or the love of this world, or some such corruption of our heart. To bewail this our perverse nature not easily reformed; a great affliction must work on Manasseh, great distress the prodigal son, before they will come to themselves, and turn to the Lord; yea, some are worse for afflictions, as may be seen in Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, in Amon, chap. xxxiii. 23, in the antichristians, Rev. xvi. 11, and in the Jews, Jer. v. 3.

*And they took them.* This may seem an act of their own, as that of Lamech, Gen. iv. 19, and that of the sons of God, Gen. vi. 2, and not their mother's deed, as is said of Hagar, Gen. xxi. 21. If they did this with her consent, it was as godly children should do, to marry with consent of parents, for parents have authority in this case, 1 Cor. vii.; children owe this honour to them. Examples of the godly, as in Isaac, and Jacob, and Samson, move to it, and the contrary is found fault with, Gen. vi. 2, and in Esau; our laws require it, godly men and learned divines so teach out of the word. Let children therefore herein take advice of their parents, they shall thrive the better: if they do well, their parents will rejoice; if otherwise, then children may more boldly seek to parents for comfort, and expect help at their hands.

*Wives.* So women be called when they be married unto men, or betrothed. It is as if it had been said, They took young women for wives to live in God's ordinance, and not for wantons to live in uncleanness. Though they were not in Israel, yet they let not loose the unbridled lust of nature, but used marriage, the ordinance of God. So men are to take women as wives, to live together in God's holy ordinance, as the godly have ever made conscience to do, and not to live as brute beasts, to defile themselves, as Hamor did Dinah, and Zimri did Cozbi, in the sin of fornication. From this must we fly, as the apostle exhorteth, and from other degrees of uncleanness, as adultery, which God severely punished, 2 Sam. xxii. 10, Job xxxi. 9, 11; so incest, Gen. xix. 36, 1 Cor. v. 1, 2 Sam. xiii. 14, and other unnatural pollutions not to be named, Rom. i., which God giveth reprobate minds over unto.

*Of the women of Moab.* With these they were not to marry, Deut. vii. 3, and xxiii. 3 Ezra ix. 1, 2, Neh. xiii. 23, 25, 26. Young persons in their choice

soon err, if they suffer lust to rule, and follow not the law of God, Gen. vi. 2. Herein wise Solomon was overtaken, Neh. xiii. 26, 1 Kings xi. 1. Therefore men are to bridle appetite and lust, and let the Lord rule them; religion and reason guide them herein. The children of God are not to marry with the daughters of men; it is condemned, Gen. vi. 2, the contrary commanded, Deut. vii. 3, 4. See there the reason and equity thereof. Ever such marriages are not made in the Lord as they ought, 1 Cor. vii. 36, and God hath punished such matches; see in Solomon, 1 Kings xi., and in Jehoshaphat, in marrying his son to Athaliah, 2 Chron. xxi. 6. If Rahab be a believer, Salmon may take her to wife, and so Boaz may marry Ruth; and if there were none other to match with in the world, Abraham may take one out of another country for Isaac, and Jacob may marry Laban's daughter; but there is no such want, but that the sons of Abraham may match with the daughters of Abraham now.

*The name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth.* This was the wife of Mahlon, chap. iv. 10, the elder brother, and Orpah the wife of Chilion, the younger; whether sisters or no, or of what parents these came, is not mentioned. These heathen people refused not in those days to match with strangers. Jethro giveth his daughter to Moses, which must be for his virtue and not for his wealth, for he had none; he was brought up like a prince, but he humbled himself to keep sheep, and so obtained his wife. Men's manhood, virtues, and painfulness in those days got them wives. Caleb will marry his daughter for the man's virtue's sake, and valorous spirit; Saul will pretend as much towards David, but that was pretended in policy, not in truth; Laban the worldling will marry his daughters for the world, and sell them for gain; but a godly man preferreth grace before goods, and wisdom before the world; though where grace is, if goods may come with it, it is a blessing, and the better to be liked of, for help to uphold the burden of marriage.

*And they dwelt there about ten years.* Whether this time beginneth at their first coming, or after this marriage, is not certain, but it is ten years before Naomi hears of the Lord's visiting of Israel with plenty. It is a long time for a godly woman to be kept from God's people, and public service of his name. David lamented it much, Ps. cxx. 5, and desired the presence of God and his tabernacle, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 4. In Moab was corporal plenty, but not spiritual; for the one the other was neglected. Such is our corruption, a common sin now; I wish it had not taken possession of the best. But besides this, we may further note, how a heavy calamity may long rest upon God's people; we may read of a famine three years and a half in Ahab's days, three years in David's time, 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 1 Kings xvii. 1, Luke iv. 25, and seven years at another time, 2 Kings i., and here also for a great many of years. And this cometh through men's obstinacy in sin, and for that such things are not reformed, as God commandeth, or for that some evils are not punished as they ought to be, as for innocent bloodshed, 1 Sam. xxi. 1, for open idolatry, and murdering of the saints, as in Ahab's days. We are in such continuing judgments, to look to our ways, and bewail our sins; also seeing thus God's hand against his people so long, we may learn patience in the years of scarcity, and bless God that never thus afflicted us in any of our remembrances; for such a famine would in these northen parts be most intolerable, far more unsufferable than in hot countries, where people could humble themselves with fasting many days together.

Ver. 5. *And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and of her husband.*

This verse sheweth a further grief which befell good Naomi, which was the death of both her sons; and so to be left a heavy soul in solitariness in a strange country, where she could have no spiritual comfort, and where now she had lost her chiefest corporal comfort.

*And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them.* These enjoyed their young wives for some space, and had time to have returned home to the Lord's people, but they for bodily maintenance, and new friends gotten by their marriages, would not; the Lord therefore took them away in this strange land. Many things may be noted.

I. That the Lord gave them time to marry, and to enjoy their marriage for some space, though they made no better use of their father's death. Thus good and patient is God unto men, for their bettering, if it would be; for which praise him.

II. That when God hath proved men in patience, and they will not make right use thereof, then will he take them away, for he will not always strive in mercy. Here the abusers of God's goodness may learn to take heed.

III. That God can and will cut off sometimes young men in the flower of their youth. Thus he took away Nadab and Abihu, Hophni and Phinehas, Amnon and Absalom, two gallant young princes; so here these two, though some by violent death, and other by natural death. And this is sometime a punishment for sin, Ps. lv. 23, 1 Sam. ii. 31, but not ever; for God in mercy will take some from the evils of the world, as he did Josiah. Let none because of youth put far off the day of death. Death respecteth no age, no strength, no beauty: 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,' Eccles. xii. 1. Thy own sin may cut thee off in youth, as it did Absalom, and so the rest; or thy father's sin, as David's child was taken away, 2 Sam. xii. 14, and the ten tribes from Rehoboam, 1 Kings xi. 12, and xii. 6, and the sons of Saul.

*And the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.* This is added to aggravate the affliction of Naomi, and doth teach, that neither few nor light afflictions sometime befall the godly. Naomi lost her husband, then not one but both her sons, and left their widows without children, so as Naomi had none of his blood remaining in Moab. And as she was thus afflicted, so was David, who had proud and scornful brethren, a bloodily-minded father-in-law, a mocking Michal to his wife, lewd and unnatural children, besides many other great trials. What shall I speak of Job's trials, Jeremiah's troubles, and Paul's persecutions? Yet God thus suffers his to be tried, to make them know themselves, to shew them their graces and their imperfections, which in affliction they will manifest, to wean them from the world, to the love of a better life, to whip them from their sins, and to make our vile natures tame, to submit to his yoke. Let us look therefore for them, let us be contented and patient under them, and consider the troubles of others of old, and in the primitive church, and of later times. Let us not think our condition the worse before God, but rather the better, if instruction be with correction, for God loveth us then. It is a fault to murmur at him, it is an error to think our estate to be evil before God, because of sundry and great crosses, for many are the afflictions of the righteous; he saith not of the wicked, yet then righteous when they be afflicted; this is comfort against despair.

Note again that he saith, *the woman* was left. He saith not now, *Naomi*, as before and after, to express her dejected condition; for a widow, poor, alone, without friends, and in a strange country, is in an afflicted estate and contemptible. It is then not *Naomi*, but *the woman* in distress and misery. And lastly observe, that when death calleth, friends must part, and one leave another, husbands their wives, children their parents, and parents their children; as here, no band of love can keep them then together, death must be welcome, and unto dearest friends we must bid farewell.

Ver. 6. *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.*

Here is at the length the return of Naomi, with whom, from whence, and the reason drawing her mind homeward.

*Then she arose.* She had long abode in Moab; now, after such crosses, she ariseth to go thence, unto the church and people of God. When the Lord thus afflicted her, when she saw herself destitute of her husband and children, and had none to go unto and to converse with but idolaters, the Moabites, then she arose to leave those coasts. Note how affliction shall follow affliction, to bring home such as be the Lord's: if one cross will not do it, another shall, as we see in the prodigal son, and God's dealing with Manasseh; for the Lord is loath to lose his own; and therefore if one affliction happen, make good use thereof, else another shall follow, yea, and another after that, till we return home. Again, mark that it is then time to leave the place of our abode, when the godly are taken away, and none left but wicked to converse with. Thus, and for this cause, many left Israel in Jeroboam's days, 2 Chron. xi. 13, 16, for the godly should delight in the fellowship of the godly. David's delight was in the saints. It is also dangerous for the godly to frequent the company of the wicked, as a lamb to be among wolves. David will not dwell in the tents of the wicked, neither sit among them, Ps. xxvi., and it is a good man's property to avoid them, Ps. i. 1, and therefore let us flee the fellowship of idolaters, 1 John v., 2 Cor. vi., and the society of evil persons. For such as can live with delight among them are like them, are no true converts to God; and yet not a few which will be held religious can make themselves merry with vain persons, and condemn others for too stoical, too censorious, for that they cannot away with fleshly and carnal delights.

*With her daughters-in-law.* It appeareth that these two did voluntarily accompany her of their own minds, and not by Naomi's entreaty. This appeareth out of vers. 8 and 11. What moved them hereto but Naomi's virtues? So as we may see that the truly virtuous are of an attractive power, even as the loadstone, to draw others unto them, partly by instruction, partly by their godly conversation. Both which means we may think she used towards these while she abode in Moab; for the religious cannot but incite others unto piety. This is worthy imitation in Naomi; if practice shew our religion, it will win others, 1 Pet. iii. 1, without which even the most glorious profession in words hath no operation, no power to persuade. And here also was a mercy of God to this poor old woman, that she lost not all outward comfort; she had some to keep her company in her adversity. It is a good grace to be content to bear the poor company in a miserable estate: they be true friends which will sit down upon a dunghill with Job to mourn with him. Well, here were two daughters of Moab which would accompany Naomi, poor and afflicted Naomi. A reproof to counterfeit friends, of which now the world is full, never more.

*That she might return from the country of Moab.* This is the end why she arose, that is, left the particular place of her dwelling, not to go into some other place in Moab, as hoping of better success there, but quite to forsake the country. The kindness received there could not hold her, when she perceived the Lord to call her home, partly by afflictions in Moab, and partly by mercies now in Israel. Outward kindness of worldlings cannot keep the godly with them, when God calleth them away from them either by afflictions or by check of conscience, or by falling into sin by

them, or by feeling the want of the godly and the use of God's public service, or else by seeing or hearing of God's favour to his people. When these or such like do call upon the godly to come away, they cannot by any wordly pleasure, profit, or familiar acquaintance, or kind entertainment, stay with such men; they be like Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv., which could not be held with rest and good cheer to stay in Bethuel's house, nor David in Ziklag, when he had liberty to go into Judah, 2 Sam. ii. 2; for their spirits differ, so as they cannot truly affect one another; and the godly find crosses among the wicked to hunt them out from their society, and they cannot but fear, in a godly jealousy, to be made the worse by them, for that they know their own weakness. And therefore let us labour for this grace, to leave the society of the ungodly, lest we be ensnared by them; and if we be with them, let it be by warrant of our calling, or of necessity, and only so long as we have hope to do them good, and to win them; but if they be found obstinate, forsake them, Jer. li. 9.

*For she had heard in the country of Moab.* That is, while she did stay in that country, news was brought of plenty in Israel. As the famine did drive her from thence, so now food being there, and the crosses she found in Moab, moved her to return back again. As adversity maketh many to leave the church, so the prosperity thereof bringeth many unto it; some in truth and love, as Naomi here, others for the world, or for fear, Esther viii. 17. Let us then pray for the church's prosperity; yet not then are we to trust all that come within her lap. Note again how Naomi, in her greatest distress, heard of comfort to her country, to bring her home again. God is often the nearest in mercy to help, when in man's reason he seemeth to be furthest off. Thus was God with Jonah in the whale's belly, and with the three children in the furnace, with Daniel in the den, with David to help against most present danger, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27. Peter, the very night before his intended death by Herod, must be delivered; and so the gunpowder plot here be discovered. And God thus suffereth his so long, and to come to so narrow a strait, before he set them free, and shew himself; to humble them, to beat them out of confidence in themselves, to shew his power and mercy the more, that they may see more fully his goodness to them, to make them thankful, obedient, and the more in utmost perils to rely upon him. We are not to despair in the greatest dangers, nor to think ourselves forgotten in great extremities, but then seek to God, trust in him, and doubt not of comfort. God will have Lazarus in the grave before Christ restore him to life, and Isaac bound upon the altar before he forbid Abraham to slay him. Till the ship be ready to sink, Christ will not awake, Mat. viii. 25, 26, for so the Lord is more seen in his power and mercy towards his.

*How the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.* By bread is meant all necessary food, but especially corn, of which bread is made. Here the Lord is made the giver thereof to the Israelites, called 'his people,' whom in mercy he visited, to bestow his blessings upon; for so is *visited* here taken, and in Gen. xxi. 1, Luke i. 68, Jer. xxix. 10. Note from hence these things:

I. That God seeth his people in adversity and want, and cometh in his due time to help them, Exod. iii. 7, 8, which is from his mere mercy, and the stability of his love and promise to his people; and therefore we may learn patience in affliction, and not be impatient, as if God had forgotten, nor murmur, lest the Lord punish us, Ps. xiii. 1, 1 Cor. x.

II. That God hath ever had more specially a people for his own, called 'his people.' Thus were certain called the sons of God, Gen. vi.; thus after were the Israelites his, Deut. vii. 6, and xxvi. 18; and such be now true Christians, 1 Pet. ii. 9, Rev. xviii. 4. These he chose not for any merit in them, but of his mere love, Deut. vii. 8, Eph. i. 4. This should make us to examine ourselves how we be God's people, whether according to creation, or after the work of regeneration; for these differ from the other greatly, in the graces of God's Spirit and holy conversation, Ezek. xi. 19, and xxxvi. 26, 27, Ps. xv.; in glorious titles, Deut. xxvi. 19, Exod. xix. 6, 1 Pet. ii. 9, Rev. i. 6; and in heavenly prerogatives, as in peace with God, Rom. v. 1; in free access, with a holy boldness to God in Christ, Heb. iv.; in having God ever with them, Mat. xviii. 20; in this blessing, that 'all things work together for the best to them,' Rom. viii.; and in being a 'communion of saints,' to whom is belonging 'the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.' We are therefore to labour to be of this sort of God's people.

III. That corporal food and the necessaries of this life are God's gift, Lev. xxvi. 4, 5, Deut. xi. 14, 15, Hos. ii. 8, 9, Joel ii. 19. It is he that maketh the earth fruitful, he giveth rain, and withholds it, Hos. ii. 8, 9, Amos iv. 7, and man without him can do nothing, Ps. cxxvii. 2, Hag. i. 6, Deut. viii. 18. Praise him for these blessings, Joel ii. 26; in the want of them, acknowledge it from God, and go to him, pray to him, Mat. vi.; and this must be done in an humiliation of ourselves for the affliction, 2 Chron. vii. 14, Joel ii. 16, 17, 19. If we look for these blessings, we are to serve him, because they be his gift, and to such hath he promised them, Lev. xxvi. 3, Deut. xi. 13, 16. Let this reprove such as forget God, do not praise him, nor serve him for these blessings, and let it confute such as ascribe them to the heavens, or to the industry of man, never remembering the precept of Moses, Deut. viii. 18, and that saying in Job, xxxi. 26, 27.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her;*

*and they went on their way to return unto the land of Judah.*

In the former verse was Naomi her preparation for her journey; here is her setting forward, noting from whence, with whom, and whither.

*Wherefore.* That is, because she heard of plenty in her country: which giveth us this to understand, which before I noted, that the church's welfare procureth friends, and draweth her old acquaintance to her; for prosperity is of an attractive virtue, and men are affected with it. This will make Abimelech to seek to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 26, and Job's friends gather unto him, Job xlii. 11. This should make us seek the church's prosperity, yea, and make men frugal to preserve their estates; for prosperity gets friends (though not a few counterfeit), and adversity maketh men to be forsaken; and yet many, which might live well, bring themselves, by prodigality and lewd courses, unto misery; unworthy they be of pity.

*She departed out of the place where she was.* In what particular place of Moab she was in, is not named, though here to be understood by the name *place.* There was food here, as well as in Judah, yet she would not stay, though she was an old woman, having poor and weak attendance, the journey somewhat long for her, her estate wasted, and therefore was she to return in a base estate, which other perhaps might cast in her teeth for leaving Judah, and going into that idolatrous Moab; but all these things did not withhold her from her godly purpose. And two reasons may be given for this: the love of her own country, and her piety, esteeming highly of the means of salvation. Whence may be noted,

I. That there is a love naturally in every one to their own country. See it in Jethro, Exod. xviii. 27, Num. x. 29, 30, and Barzillai, 2 Sam. xix. 27. Jacob would return into Canaan out of Mesopotamia, where he had gotten great riches. And this love unto their country made men to adventure their lives in defence thereof, 2 Sam. x. 12. Therefore such are unnatural, who will seek the destruction thereof.

II. That corporal means cannot keep the truly religious from the place where God is worshipped, if they may enjoy the means of life in a poor measure. Naomi would not stay in Moab, though she in Judah had nothing to maintain her, but her hands, and that Ruth must glean for bread, when they came thither. What a change Moses made we all do know; a crust of bread for the body is better, with the food of the soul, than all carnal abundance without it. And therefore if the choice of our dwelling be, either where bodily plenty is, without the word, or a poor estate for the body, and plentiful instructions for the soul's safety, let us choose this rather than the other. Seek, saith our Saviour, for the food which endureth unto eternal life, which perisheth not, John v.

*And her two daughters-in-law with her.* This their accompanying of her, argueth Naomi her singular good carriage towards them while her sons lived; for if she had been proud, froward, and unkind, as some mothers-in-law have been, they would have despised her, and shaken her off; but we see, first, how good carriage procureth love; and, secondly, how true love sheweth itself in the adversity of a friend, Prov. xvii. 17, for these two forsake not poor and old Naomi in this her contemptible estate. Thus Jonathan shewed his love in David's trouble, and Job's friends, when they sat down by him; for true love is not tied to outward respects. Such love is false and hollow-hearted, the love of these times. We must imitate God in love, to love ever, and chiefly in adversity; for either love then or not at all. Be not as the shadow which sheweth itself only in sunshine; nor as the swallow which chatters, and sings over thy chimney in warm summer, but cannot be seen in winter. Friends only in appearance shape their love like to the devil, who only maketh a show of love to man, and is ever sinister in the intendment.

*And they went on their way to return to Judah.* It seemeth by this, that the two women came out to return with Naomi, who only is properly said to return, because she came out of Judah; and they had a purpose to go through with her to the end, and to leave their own native soil, their parents and friends, which was a great degree of love; but yet we may read that Orpah afterwards gave over. To begin well, and to make an onset to goodness, is easy to many; but to go on to the end, is of special grace. Cain began and made an onset to godliness, so did Joash king of Judah. Jehu did valiantly for a while. Judas seemed to be approved by his fellows, and to live without suspicion for a time. The same may be said of Ananias and Sapphira, of Simon Magus, of Demas, Hymeneus, Alexander, and Philetus, with many more; but their calling was not effectual. Called they were, but not elected; their hearts were full of hypocrisy, which will at length break out. Therefore let none think well of themselves for fair beginnings, because 'they that continue to the end shall (only) be saved.'

Ver. 8. *And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me.*

Naomi seeth their kindness, and weighing aforehand all circumstances, beginneth to make trial of the fondness of their love, and to know upon what ground it standeth, as appeareth out of the verses 11–13. The words consist of an exhortation, and a petition to God for them, rendering a reason thereof.

*And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law.* To this place there is no mention of any speech of Naomi, but only what she did: First, in following her husband into Moab, ver. 1, 2, and then of her leaving that country to return into Judah, ver. 6, 7.

Hitherto her story is of her walking, and not of her words and talking; it seemeth her tongue did not hang loose, to be upon every touch tolling, as some women's be. And this her silence commendeth her virtue therein, and also giveth us to know, that she did not solicit her daughters to go with her, but that they voluntarily undertook the journey; for if she had requested them, their love had not so appeared, neither could she have tried them, by entreating them to return back.

*Go and return.* How far on the way they were come is not noted; but on the way they were before she spake thus to them; which she did not, as careless of their souls, or of any doubt, whether God would provide for them, who would forsake their country, and become proselytes; but two reasons may be alleged why she exhorteth them to return home again. First, was her love to them, for their kindnesses formerly to her and hers, as appeareth by her prayer, and therefore she might now seem to be loath to trouble them, though their company in the way might have been comfortable, except she had known certainly how to have recompensed their love. Taking this for one, we learn, that a true lover is loath to disadvantage a friend or friends for private respects to himself; for true love seeketh also the good of a friend beloved; and a sound-hearted friend will follow the apostle's advice, 1 Cor. x. 24, not seek his own, but his friend's welfare. But this, alas! is contrary to our times, when now men are all for themselves, which self-love is contrary to Christ's commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves; it is against the communion and fellowship of Christians, as 'members one of another;' it is contrary to the end of our labour in our callings, 2 Cor. xii. 14, Eph. iv. 28, which is, to do good to others; contrary to that care which God commandeth, for the preservation of other men's estate, Deut. xxii. 2, 4, Exod. xxiii. 4, 5; contrary to Abraham's practice, Gen. xxiii. 9, whose children we must be, and whose works we must do. This self-love is the original of all bribery, extortion, usury, deceit, fraud, oppression, and unjust dealings among men; this maketh men envious, that they cannot rejoice in other men's welfare; and this maketh men without compassion in another man's misery, if they themselves live at ease. This root of bitterness must be rooted out.

The second reason was her want of means to give them comfort in the world, to provide for them necessaries or convenient matches, as her words imply in verses 12, 13. She knew them to have friends and parents in Moab, but none in Judah, and therefore she was loath to make them worse, and to carry them to an unknown place, except she could better have provided for them with some certainty. True love will not make worse where it cannot make better. But here it may be demanded, whether Naomi did well to persuade them to return? I answer, if she had done it in carelessness of their souls, or in a coldness of religion, she had offended; but it was partly in her love to them for their outward estate, not knowing how to pleasure them, if they should take such pains to go with her, and leave their own country; and partly out of her wisdom, to try them whether indeed they fully resolved to go with her, let fall out what might fall out. And this was praiseworthy in her thus to try their soundness, for hereby she found one rotten at the core, and the other most sound. And thus should we also do in these deceitful days, try before we trust such as offer themselves to come among the godly, as also did our Saviour, Luke ix. 57, 58, lest when they hastily entertain religion they as suddenly fall back, to the reproach of the gospel and blemish of such as admitted them without trial.

If any ask why she persuaded them not to stay at home whilst they were there, but to let them go on the way, and then to will them to return back? I answer, it may be that she took their coming forth to be of courtesy to take leave of her, after she had gone somewhat on her journey, which kindness there was no reason to refuse; but perceiving that they would go on, she then fell to make trial of them, and to understand what might lead them thereto. And this was better done in the way than at home, to discern more fully of their resolution. In the trial of others, it is then best done, when the same may most appear; this is wisdom.

*Each to her mother's house.* Here is an argument to move them to return back, because they had natural parents alive, and she but a mother-in-law. She trieth them with this first, to see whether nature wrought more than grace. This she knew to be a strong pull-back, and that nature must first be subdued to follow soundly the course of godliness. We must forsake father and mother for the gospel, saith Christ, yea, and deny ourselves. If thus we can do, then are we to be admitted into the fellowship of the faithful. These words shew they were not natural sisters, because Naomi willeth each of them to go to her mother's house, as having either of them a mother. In that Naomi thus speaketh, we may further note,

I. That of either parent children are drawn with most affection to their mothers, because all children have most of their mothers, being conceived in them, long borne of them, and nursed by them; also, for that mothers are more tender-hearted towards them, and most familiar with them: therefore here is their mothers' house named, though afterwards Ruth's father, chap. ii. 11. And yet some children we see ready enough to despise their mothers, which is contrary to nature, contrary to the commandment, Exod. xx., Prov. i. 8. Yea, it is great ingratitude to requite so the great pains in conception, in bearing, in nursing, which a child can never recompense, and therefore a curse is pronounced against such children, Deut.

xxvii. 16, Prov. xx. 20; and of this the prophet Ezekiel complaineth, chap. xxii. 7.

II. That poor widows are to be maintained of their able parents when they be left alone, and cannot maintain themselves, Lev. xxii. 13, 1 Tim. v. 16. The law of nature, and, we see, the law of God leadeth thereto, and Naomi knew not whither else to send them. And whither should children go but unto their parents? If this be so, then let parents see to the well matching of their children, to prevent their poverty if it may be, and a second charge of them. Let children be then ruled of their parents in taking marriage upon them, seeing parents are to be troubled again with them if need require. Yea, and let husbands have care when they have received their wives' portions, so to husband the same that they may leave them to live after them, and not to be again chargeable to their friends.

*The Lord deal kindly with you.* Her prayer for them, which was her best recompence for their love, being now poor, and not otherwise able to requite them their kindness. Note hence,

I. That it is a duty to pray for those which do either us or ours good. So doth Naomi here; so Boaz for Ruth, chap. ii. 12; David for Abigail's good counsel, 1 Sam. xxv. 33; and Saul for David sparing his life, 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. And this duty lets us perform, as Christ in the form of prayer hath taught us, Mat. vi., and not pray only for ourselves, as worldlings do, nor to think a favour done is requited with *I thank you* only, and that prayer for a blessing upon them is not required, especially if they be superiors; and yet we see here the practice of superiors to inferiors.

II. That at parting friends are to pray one for another, as we may see the practice of it in Isaac, Gen. xxviii. 1, 3; Laban, Gen. xxxi. 55; Jacob, Gen. xliii. 14; and in Paul, Acts xx. 36. It is very Christian-like, an argument of love, and desire of their own welfare, which cannot be without God's protection. Put this, therefore, into practice. True it is that men now do it, but it is not with that reverence, nor expressed with that earnest desire, as is meet and befitting in such a case.

III. That the godly are persuaded that the Lord is a merciful rewarder of the duties of love which one doth towards another. This Naomi her prayer to God for them here teacheth, for the godly know that the Lord hath commanded such duties; and what he commandeth to be done, that will he reward in the doer. And hereof let us be well persuaded, this will make us do our duties cheerfully, though men requite not our pains, because God will. By this reason St Paul encourageth servants to their duties, and to do what they ought heartily, Col. iii. 24.

IV. That children should so well deserve of parents, yea, though but parents-in-law, as they may be moved heartily to pray for them, as Naomi doth in this place. A good carriage is a duty towards all, then much more to parents; and the prayers of parents is a means to put a blessing upon their children. But some children are so far from doing their duties to their parents to procure a blessing, as they with Ham deserve a curse. Such a one was rebellious Absalom, bloody Cain; such a one was Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, whom the Lord punished.

V. That God will not only barely reward, but so deal with us as we deal with others. This Naomi begs for, this the Lord in mercy will do, Mat. vii. 2, for our encouragement to well-doing; he will reward us according to our works. This should stir us up to do our duties unto our brethren, knowing that as we do we shall be done unto.

*As ye have dealt with the dead and with me.* Here Naomi acknowledgeth their loving obedience and good carriage towards their husbands when they were alive, and now to her, they being dead; and this maketh her to pray thus for them.

Note here, first, that daughters of a bad race may prove good wives, and good children-in-law sometime, as these daughters of idolaters did, when God restraineth nature and giveth grace withal. For many times there are tractable and gentle natures, where religion is not grafted; these by good instruction and God's blessing may prove excellent wives. Children, therefore, are not ever to be censured according to their parents, though it is dangerous to graft in a bad stock, for an hundred to one but a Michal will make a David know that she is a Saul's daughter. But here women Christians are taught to shew themselves good wives and children, or else these daughters of the heathen will condemn them, whom Naomi commendeth for good wives. Now, to be a good wife, a woman must know her duty, and be very desirous to do it, which stands in love unfeigned, in fear to offend, in cheerful obedience, in meekness of spirit, and in sympathising with her husband in prosperity and adversity, Eph. v. 22, Col. iii. 18, 1 Peter iii. But where is the woman? where is this Sarah, this Rebekah? She will answer, perhaps, Where there is an Abraham and an Isaac, for a good husband will make a good wife; a good John a good Joan. The body will obey where the head knoweth how to rule well.

II. That good and truly loving wives love their husbands' parents for their husbands' sake, as these did Naomi. For the wife and husband are one, and should be of one heart, and the one love where the other liketh; and a good wife striveth to please and content her husband in shewing love to his friends. She will not be like such lewd wives, women not worthy to be wives, which hate their husbands' kindred, and browbeat them out of their houses.

Ver. 9. *The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them: and they lift up their voice and wept.*

Naomi her continuing in prayer for them, as before

in general, now in particular, for a special blessing. This verse containeth a petition, an act of a valediction, and the passion which it wrought.

*The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband.* She prayeth here for their second marriage, and that the same might be blessed of the Lord, the chief marriage-maker, so as it might procure them rest, and be a quiet, contented marriage to their comfort. Note hence,

I. That godly and wise friends pray not only in general, but in particular, as they know them to stand in need, for whom they do pray, as here Naomi for good husbands for her daughters-in-law; for we should take notice of our friends' wants, and so pray for them, and not rest in generals.

II. Godly mothers-in-law are hearty well-wishers to their children-in-law, whether they be such by a former husband departed, or by another husband living, or by the marriage of their children, as Naomi is here mother to these; for the love they bear to their husbands, and because godly women know themselves to be stepmothers, stepped in to be instead of natural mothers, and therefore do make conscience to supply their want; which if it be so, or ought to be so, it reproveth those stepdames which are unkind and cruel to their children-in-law, and cannot endure the sight of them.

III. That second marriages be lawful, 1 Tim. v. 11, 14. The reason is given by the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 9, 36, which confuteth such heretics as in former times have denied this, contrary to the apostle's doctrine, and the example of Abraham, in marrying Keturah.

IV. That husbands are to be their wives' rest, chap. iii. 1; and they are so called, because of the desire of women to marry, and because they seek rest in their marriage, and for that loving wives take rest and contentment in their own husbands, who ought therefore to be rest unto them; which shall be if they do love them as they ought, Eph. v. 22, if they wisely govern them, 1 Peter iii. 7, if they provide and allow them what is meet, according to their ability, in all decency and honest contentment; if they keep their faith plight, and rejoice in them, and with them, they cannot but find rest. But unloving and fierce natures, Lamech-like husbands, a word and a blow, or terrible threats, miserable and niggardly Nabals, so prodigal and unthrifty, drunken or adulterous husbands, are so far from being poor women's rest, as they make them weary of their lives. But now if husbands must be their wives' rest, and that they look for it, then wives must care to make their husbands so to them, by willing obedience, by meekness of spirit, very acceptable to God, 1 Peter iii. 4, by seeking to please them, by speaking to them in a loving reverence, and to keep silence when words may offend, or not do good, as wise Abigail did, by a wise frugal course, and good housewifery, as the woman in the Proverbs, chap. xxxi. Speak not foolishly, as Job's wife, to thy husband in his grief; nor mock him not, like a barren Michal; nor abuse him not, as Potiphar's wife would have done her husband; nor be impatient for not having thine own will, as Rachel was; but rest in his will, and thou shalt find him thy rest. Here is also an use for parents, to match so their daughters, as they may get husbands as rests for them; and this will be, when they marry their daughters betime to men of wisdom, fit for years, not unfit for birth and estate, well agreeing in qualities and good conditions, and in religion.

V. That it is God's blessing to be peaceably married, Prov. xviii. 22, and xix. 14. He is the marriage-maker, whosoever are the means; and he is the disposer and framer of their hearts one to another; therefore let God herein be sought unto, and let him receive praises and thanks for such a blessing, the greatest corporal comfort in this world.

*Then she kissed them.* This action we may find fourfold: carnal, as in fleshly lust; hypocritical, as was Joab's and Judas's kiss; holy, of which the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xvi. 20; or civil, as here. This was used at the meeting of friends, Gen. xxix. 11, and xxxiii. 4; at their departing, Gen. xxxi. 55, 2 Sam. xix. 39, Acts xx. 37. This was used between men and men, Gen. xlv. 15, Exod. iv. 27, 2 Sam. xix. 39; between women and women, as here in this place; and between some men and some sort of women, as between husband and wife in meeting and departing, parents and children and nigh kinsfolk, Gen. xxix. 11, but not strangers, nor others not of kindred, to avoid the suspicion of wantonness. It was honestly used to testify love and unity, as Isaac did to Jacob, Gen. xxvii. 26; and therefore in the primitive church, before they received the sacrament, they thus saluted one another.*

*And they lift up their voice and wept.* Here was an answerable affection to the kindness of her action; her sign of love was not without love again to her: for it was not a few silent tears from the eyes, but a passion of the heart, breaking forth into wailing and weeping, so as their voice of mourning was heard, an argument of love and true affection towards her. This is rare love between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, in these days. But concerning weeping, it is used in Scripture,

I. To express sorrow, as at the parting of friends: Joseph, at his father's departing; Abraham, at Sarah's; Joash, at Elisha's, 2 Kings xiii. 14; and when friends must leave one another, though death separate them not, as when Jonathan and David parted, 1 Sam. xx. 41. And who can but weep, if true love be there, when friends must bid adieu one to another, and especially for ever, as we may see in Acts xx. 37?

II. For very joy, as Joseph's sight of his brethren, Gen. xlv. 14; and so Jacob at Joseph's coming to him, Gen. xlvi. 29; so did Jacob in meeting with Rachel, Gen. xxix. 11. Such true loving natures have

* Just. Apol. 2. Beza on 2 Cor. xiii.

been in the godly in former times, but now men are lovers of themselves, without natural affection, 1 Tim. iii.

III. In pity and compassion, from a merciful heart, to behold the miseries of others, as Job did for the poor, chap. xxx. 25; Isaiah for the people, xxii. 4; so Jeremiah, chap. iv. 19, and ix. 1, and xiii. 17; Christ Jesus for the Jews, Luke xix. 41. This is a charitable and a holy weeping, when men can weep for the miseries of other, corporal but chiefly spiritual, as David did, because men kept not God's law, Ps. cxix.

IV. Sometimes some will weep in the apprehension of the kindness shewed to them, where none but utmost extremity is deserved, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. Now, if David's forbearing of Saul wrought in Saul this passion, how should we be moved to consider of Christ's love to us, and our cruelty against him!

Ver. 10. *And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.*

Before was noted their affection, here is set down their resolution, which was to accompany her, and also how far.

*And they said unto her.* All this while they heard her, they accompanied her, but no mention of any speech hitherto made unto her. But now necessity compelleth them to break silence; which, though it be a special jewel in women, who are too tongue-ripe, yet sometime necessity enforceth them. If this might be the only key to make them speak, they then speaking were worthy attention, if withal they would speak in wisdom, and within compass, knowing when again to keep silence.

*Surely we will return.* That is, dissuade us not thus to leave thee, for we are resolved to go with thee in this thy return home. Where note, that an earnest affection suffereth not easily a separation from the party affected. For the truth of this, see it in any sort of love: as in carnal love, between Samson and Delilah, Judges xvi.; in natural, between David and Absalom; in friendly love, between Jonathan and David, and Mephibosheth to David also; in Christian love, as in Paul to the Jews, Romans ix. 13, and in Moses to the Israelites; and in divine love, as of God's to us, and of blessed martyrs towards God again. In all these, what provocations were there to break off, except it be in God's behalf towards us, who offereth no occasion to make us leave him? Yet where affection is settled, there will hardly be a separation; for true love liveth in the party beloved, and can no more forsake him than himself. It is also full of patience to put up wrongs, and taketh everything in the best part, and hopeth of better in the worst things. Let us hereby try our love, which is ever with peace and unity; for where discord is, there is no love. Such then are hollow-hearted friends, which profess love, and yet upon every trifle break out into manifest signs of hatred.

*With thee.* As if they had said, Though thou beest our mother-in-law, and art but one, and a poor woman, yet thy grace and virtue is such as we are content to forsake our country and carnal kindred for thee; with thee will we therefore go. And indeed it is better to have the company of one sound Christian, than to enjoy the fellowship of a world of wordlings. Good Jonathan took more delight in one David, than in the society of all his father's house; for the fellowship of the godly is comfortable and very joyous to the soul of such as be godly, but the company of worldlings vain and unfruitful to God-ward. The godly are worthy to be affected and loved; they be the children of the Most High, and the world is not worthy of them, no, not when they be in the basest condition in the judgment of men, Heb. xi. 38. And the godly are such as with whom God is for ever, who go the way to eternal life, which whosoever looketh for must keep them company thither. And therefore let us join ourselves to them, sit down with them, delight in them, Ps. ci. 6, and xvi. 3, and cxix. 63, 79; and avoid others, Prov. xxiii. 1, Ps. xxvi. 4, 5, and ci. 3, 4, 7, 8.

*Unto thy people.* Thus they call the people of Israel, God's people and God's church, to shew that there is a right in every particular member to the church, as in the church to every member, and all to Christ, and Christ to them, 1 Cor. xii. 12. For the church is as a body, whereof Christ is the head, and every one one another's members. We may therefore claim a right in one another, to care for and watch over one another; we may claim a right in all the church's rites and divine ordinances of God belonging thereto for our salvation; and therefore should every member care for the preservation of the whole, and the whole for every member, and take their wrongs to heart. Lastly, note out of this verse, that both the women, in their passion, speak the same thing, but yet, upon more deliberation, one of them calleth back her word. By which we may see that in passionate affection more will be spoken than acted; as we may here see in Orpah her promise, in Saul also, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, and xxvi. 21, and in David's heat of spirit, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. For passion causeth men to speak unadvisedly, and more than they would if they did consider thereof; yea, in passion men are not themselves, neither can the hypocrisy of the heart be discerned, no, not of the parties themselves at the present instant of time, which maketh such to speak better than they either can or will do afterwards; as appeareth here in Orpah, and in Saul. We are not to value words uttered in passion, nor to regard them, either to advantage ourselves or to harm the speaker, as many do, who catch men in their sudden speeches, sometime to gain by them, sometime to trouble them. This ought not to be; charity would teach better things.

Ver. 11. *And Naomi said, Turn again, my daugh-*

*ters; why will you go with me? Are there yet more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?*

Naomi's reply unto their speech and second trial of them; wherein is an exhortation and a double interrogation: the first moving to a more serious examination of their resolution, and the second a reason of her continued exhortation.

*And Naomi said.* She maketh a second essay upon them, though she saw their passion and heard their resolution, for she knew that a sound trial is not made at once. We see Orpah withstood the first, and made as good a show as Ruth, both in her tears and talk, yet soon after she gave over. With these fair onsets Satan was well acquainted; and therefore both with Job and Christ, though he prevailed not at the first, yet hoped to overcome at the last. Constancy standeth not in one act, neither is therein to be discerned; and therefore let none think they have sufficient trial of any because they have made once an essay with them in any matter; neither let any man think that he hath done valiantly because he hath resisted a temptation once, and could not be overcome, for thou mayest be set upon again and again; and if after many thou beest overcome, thou hast lost thy glory in the rest.

*Turn again, my daughters.* Of the exhortation before in the 8th verse. Here Naomi kindly calleth them her daughters, which she might do both for her ancientness in years and also for that she was their mother by marriage. This is a term of love which here she doth express to shew that her exhortation came not for want of love, but even in love she did it, as before is noted, and as appeareth plainly in the last words of the ver. 13. And herein is a point of godly discretion, which is, that in giving counsel to or fro, it is good so to speak as may declare love and respect to the parties, as she doth here, Abigail to David, Jethro to Moses, yea, and Lot to the very abominable Sodomites; because the manifesting of love in advising, exhorting, admonishing, or reproving, doth make way in the heart of the party advised and reproved, and the contrary shuts up men's hearts and ears, as experience doth shew. And therefore in such cases let us shew love by using good and loving terms, by protesting our true affection, if so need require, by giving good reasons thereof that may fully shew it, and by being ready to do them good, offering them to do it if there shall be occasion of it. Note more, that it was a custom among the Jews for parents and children to speak most commonly one to another in the nearest and dearest terms of love, by the name of father, mother, son, daughter, and not by calling them only by their names, as parents do children now. See this in Gen. xxii. 7, and xxvii. 1, and xlviii. 19, and in many other places, which argued meekness of spirit, entire affection, and a loving natural kindness, worthy imitation.

*Why will you go with me?* This question is propounded to draw them to a consideration of some reasons within themselves why they should resolve to go with her; as if she had said, I love you as a mother her daughters, therefore I advise you to consider seriously of your resolution aforehand, and weigh with yourselves what may so lead you; for I can see no reason in worldly respects (for such only she urged both here and in the verses following) why you should go with me. And by this, as she taught them, so we may learn, that it is a point of wisdom to ask ourselves, why we will do this or that thing, before we undertake it or resolve upon it. And hereunto our Saviour advised, Luke xiv. 28, for that is well begun which is laid upon good grounds and sound reasons; it is a wise proceeding, it will prevent the after *Had I wist*, and future repentance. Let us therefore learn this wisdom, and not be foolishly rash in our attempts.

*Are there yet any sons in my womb that they may be your husbands?* Naomi now beginneth to bring in her reasons why she would have them to return, all drawn from the world, in which respect she giveth them no comfort to follow her; and it is as if she had said, If you will go with me for any worldly respect, alas, I cannot pleasure you, I am old, I have no sons to marry you again unto; and as for an outward estate, you see me very poor. In thus speaking plainly, and dissuading only by worldly reasons to try them, we may learn,

I. That the true honest-hearted, and such as fear God, in the kind offers of their friends, deal truly with them, and will not lead them into vain hopes. Thus Naomi dealeth; thus did our Saviour, Mat. viii. 20, for they would not deceive them. We must labour for this plain dealing, and not only look to ourselves, and what present benefit we may get to ourselves, as most do in these deceitful times, which is contrary to our Christianity, 1 Thes. iv. 6, to true love, 1 Cor. xiii., and to the comfort of our own consciences. Men now-a-days gladly make gain of all proffers of love, without any respect to their friends; because men are false-hearted and like such as David was troubled with, Ps. xli. 6.

II. That worldly respects are not the motives which should induce any to join themselves with God's people, for they want these things often. Of this our Saviour telleth the lawyer, Luke ix. 57. The godly here have their least share in the things of this life, because they have a better portion provided for them in the life to come. We are not, then, to become professors of religion with others for these worldly things. Naomi telleth thee this is not a good reason. Christ telleth thee he is poor, and such as follow him must take up their cross, must suffer affliction, saith Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 12, for to the godly it is given to suffer for him, Philip. i. 29. Beware of a Judas mind, to come for the bag; or a Demas-like disposition, to come before thou hast shaken off the love of the world: for if thou doest not, thou wilt sell Christ for the world, and bid the gospel adieu for goods.

*Quest.* Why is it said that she had no sons more for them to marry? Why should she thus speak to them? We must know that it was a law among the Jews, that a brother should raise up seed to a brother who left a wife and died childless, Deut. xxv. 5, Gen. xxxviii. 8, 11; to which law and practice her speech alludeth. And by this we may think it very likely, that these women were taught in the law of God, and made acquainted with the practice of God's people. This is very probable, because Naomi was so godly a matron, and it appeareth by Ruth's virtues; which being so, it commendeth the care of Naomi and her sons, for the souls of these young women, born of idolaters out of the church, to teach them the law of the true God. A good example for parents to follow, and for husbands; for fathers and mothers, see Prov. iv. 3, 4, Deut. vi. 7, Eph. vi. 4, Deut. xi. 19, Prov. xxxi. 1, 2, 2 Tim. i. 5 and iii. 15; and for husbands, read 1 Cor. xiv. 35. But, alas, many are so ignorant as they cannot teach them, and many so careless as they neglect them, many so wretched as they will not, and some so profane as they mock at it, and hold it no duty for them, but for the priest (as in scorn they call the minister of Christ) to perform.

Ver. 12. *Turn again, my daughters; go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons.*

Naomi's third motion to have them to return, using still the same exhortation, with the like kind terms of love, and adding another reason to move them to return.

*Turn again, my daughters; go your way.* Naomi ceaseth not to urge them still, to try them to the utmost, not in want of zeal to gain them to God, but in a godly jealousy, fearing their constancy, if they should go on with her; of this before at large, and therefore here I omit the instructions.

*For I am too old to have an husband.* This reason is a preventing of an objection to her former reason; for they might say, Though, mother, you be not with child now, yet you may marry and have children. To this Naomi answereth, that she is too old to have an husband. From this we learn, that there is a time when women are too old to marry, by the opinion of godly Naomi. Now, if any ask when that is, I answer, as I suppose, when a woman is about sixty years of age; and therefore St Paul alloweth such a one for a widow, but not under, giving leave to others to marry; for under sixty women have had children, but none above, but Sarah's extraordinary blessing. And it is fit for women after sixty to follow the praise of blessed Anna, Luke i. 37. We read not in the Scripture of the marriage of such; and if they be poor among us, and do marry, we dislike it, and speak against it; if they allege the ends of marriage, they are easily answered. For the first is for procreation of children, which in them is past; the other is to avoid fornication, which they should be far from, seeing the body is dead, the heart should not grow rank with filthy lust: the lecherous old person is hated of God. If they allege to marry for mutual comfort, I ask, with whom will she marry for such comfort? If with a young man, she may perhaps comfort herself in him, but not he himself with her; for young men marry old women's goods and lands, but not their persons; there is in nature no accord between them. Her wanton heart may seek her pleasure in matching with him, but he will take no contentment in her but for what she hath. If with an old man, where is comfort when two froward old persons meet together. Old age, all know, is hard to please, and therefore old persons can hardly afford kind comforts one to another. Lastly, marriage bringeth cares and troubles, 1 Cor. vii., saith St Paul. Now, it is time for old women to lay aside the cares of this world, and to give themselves to fasting and prayer, and to do good works, and to shew their care for the world to come; and therefore let such widows continue widows, and betake themselves to God and his divine worship, as best befitteth them.

*If I should say, I have hope.* To wit, to have children, and so might take an husband; implying thus much, that while a woman hath hope of children she may marry, for the first and chiefest end of marriage such a one is not deprived of; and therefore let child-bearing women use their liberty and marry, if they cannot abstain, 1 Cor. vii., 1 Tim. v. 28; yea, though they be poor, neither may any be offended thereat.

*If I should have an husband also to-night.* This circumstance of time is noted, that these women had gone nigh one day's journey with Naomi at the least. So they shewed herein great kindness to travel so far with her, or that it was far on the day before they came forth, if this was the first night; or else she speaketh thus, for that marriage was consummated at night. Here some may ask, Why needed Naomi thus to speak of her having an husband and bearing of children, seeing she knew that the next kinsman was to do the office for the dead? chap. iii. 1, 2. She might have said, Your husbands have kinsmen, which by our law are to marry you, if you will go with me, though I have no sons myself. Naomi knew this well enough, as it appeareth afterwards; but, first, she will not draw them to the Lord's people with such carnal reasons. Again, she knew not perhaps now whether such were dead or alive: if alive, yet they might be married, and so could not take them for wives; if unmarried, she yet knew not whether they would submit to the law in that case. For we see that what God commanded was not ever obeyed, and the story telleth us that one kinsman, chap. iv., refused her, and why not another? And therefore because she could not speak anything of certainty on which they might depend, she

mentioneth no such thing; shewing this, that the wise will not make promises rashly for others, nor persuade to more than they well know, lest they be deceived, and so also deceive others relying upon their word. This reproveth all rash undertakers for others, though reason and religion should bind those for whom they so undertake to perform the same.

*And should also bear sons.* Naomi speaketh first of having a husband, and then of bearing children; for childbirth is to be the fruit of lawful marriage only. God first joined man and woman, and made them man and wife, and then said, Increase and multiply. Naomi was not of that mind to make herself a mother out of marriage, as many wantons and light-skirts do, making themselves whores and their children bastards, and all for satisfying the rage of present lust, though after they repent with grief and shame.

Ver. 13. *Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.*

Naomi here dissuadeth them from staying for husbands from her, if it were granted that now she had born sons; and having thus spoken, she breaketh forth into a sorrowful complaint of her inability to do them good, for their sakes. The dissausion is set out by a double interrogation, for more vehemency of speech, and by an answer made thereto. In the complaint she sheweth her grief, and that for whose sake chiefly, and how it came upon her.

*Would ye tarry for them till they were grown?* As if she had said, If I had now young sons, you could not marry them till they were of sufficient years, they must be grown up to marriage before they do marry; marriage is for them that are grown up for it, and are marriageable. God, when he made our first parents, made them of years fit for procreation of children before he married them. And this is to be observed for the due accomplishment of marriage, and for reverence to God's ordinance, which checketh those parents who, for other ends than the ends of marriage, do match their children together before they be marriageable. Here parents abuse marriage, for this is no conjunction for procreation of children, nor to avoid fornication. These parents take away their children's liberty, which is to marry, or not to marry, when they come to years of discretion. They are cruel and merciless parents, who bind their children in an inseparable knot and indissoluble bond, before they understand what they do. Such matches are commonly cursed of God, one forsaking another when they come to years, or hating one another, living in the gall of bitterness all their days; and so parents' expectation is frustrate, and children undone, with sorrow to friends on all sides: a just punishment of God, and reward of their sin.

*Would ye stay for them from having husbands?* As if she had said, You are young women, and there are men now fit husbands for you; it is not meet you should therefore stay so long for little children, and so be unfitly matched with them so young and you so old. It is not good for such as intend to marry to defer off too long. This is it which Naomi here teacheth her daughters; and this counsel is good if the parties cannot abstain, and that fit matches be offered. Let them yield to the good hand of God's providence, and not refuse an honest offer either of pride or of foolish fantasy, or of some nicety, or other light and idle womanish reason, against good reason and sound persuasion of godly and wise friends.

*Nay, my daughters.* This answer sheweth Naomi her meaning in the former interrogations, that she could not approve of their deferring off to marry, but that, being young, they should not refuse to marry again when God should send them fit husbands. A godly and wise mother-in-law like Naomi can not only be willing, but also will persuade her children-in-law should marry again; for they know this liberty is granted them of God, and in their own conscience they know it reasonable, and perhaps in others of necessity. She was not like those mothers-in-law which, after the death of their own children, cannot endure to hear of the second marriage of their children-in-law, whether sons or daughters.

*For it grieveth me much.* Here is the reason given why she willeth them to return and to take husbands again, even for the grief of her heart; for that, seeing them as poor widows as herself, and remembering her sons and how little she could do for them, she heavily sustained the grief, and therefore persuaded them to take husbands again, in whom they might have comfort. Note here how the most godly sometime do take their afflictions very heavily, as Naomi here, so Job, chap. iii., Jer. chap. xx. 9, 12, which cometh through weakness of faith, want of patience, want of humility, through also the strength of corruption and the aggravating of the affliction, ever looking upon it but not weighing the will of God, the necessity of the cross, and the good which might come thereby. Well, yet if the best may be much cast down, then let not such as be free, not under the cross, not knowing how they can bear it, censure others for their weakness under the burden, but rather take notice thereof, and be a staff of comfort to them, help to bear the burden with them, and pray for their patience.

*For your sakes.* Afflictions are the more grievous for friends wrapped therein, so as one cannot well help another. Naomi was greatly afflicted, but the more (she saith) for her daughters' misery with her, who, losing her sons, made also them poor widows. Abimelech's destruction increased David's sorrows and troubles, Ps. lii.; Elijah not a little grieved for the widow's sorrow with whom he sojourned, 1 Kings xvii. 20, 21; and so was Luther for the Duke of

Saxony;* and the reason hereof is true love, which taketh to heart a friend's affliction in their own troubles, as David did Abiathar's, 1 Sam. xxii. 22. This grace of true friendship is much to be wished; for men now-a-days care not much for their friends' misery if they be in prosperity, or if in adversity with them how they themselves may get out, though they leave their friends as a pawn for themselves; yea, such villany is in some men that they will purposely bring their friends into misery to do themselves a pleasure, cozen them to enrich themselves, overthrow them to set up themselves.

*That the hand of the Lord.* Thus she calleth her affliction the hand of the Lord, because all afflictions come by the power and providence of God as by an hand upon us, Job. i. 21 and xvi. 12, Lam. i. 12, 17, Amos. iii. 6 and iv. 6, 7, 11, 2 Chron. xv. 6, Isa. xlv. 6, 7. For 'afflictions come not out of the dust, neither do troubles spring out of the ground,' Job v. 6. Let, then, all afflictions be acknowledged to be God's hand, not as chance with the Philistines, not of the devil, witches, and ill instruments. If we acknowledge them, with Job, from God, we will go to him, humble ourselves before him, pray for pardon and deliverance by him, as who only can deliver us; yea, this will make us patient under the cross, this will work some contentment, and say, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' This will make us quiet towards the ill instruments, as David was towards Saul and towards Shimei. This will comfort us under the affliction, when we know it to be God's hand, and that, out of his fatherly mercy, he will lay no more upon us than we shall be able to bear.

*Is gone out against me.* This good woman applieth the whole cross to herself. The godly in common calamities take themselves to be especially chastised; they put not off the cause to others, but take it to themselves, as David did, 1 Chron. xxi. 17, 2 Sam. xxiv. 27; they think upon their own sins, and not on other men's misdeeds. This is that which humbleth them, and this is it which would humble us; which grace we must labour for.

Ver. 14. *And they lift up their voice, and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her.*

Here is the event and effect of Naomi's speech again, first jointly in both, which was again their passion, and then distinctly shewed in contraries, in Orpah's valediction, and Ruth remaining still with her mother-in-law.

*And they lift up their voice, and wept again.* Again their passion of tears is recorded, both alike in passion of affection, but far differing in the truth of the action, the best demonstration of the heart, for in both was a like show of love in their weeping, yet not the like constant conjunction of heart towards Naomi; for the one forsook her, and the other abode and went on with her: whence we may see that all outward sorrow giveth not certain witness of the soundness of the heart. This is plain by this example, and by Saul's weeping to David. As this is true in men, so more in women, who have tears at command. Do we not read how the Israelites would weep on one day, and be in rebellion another? Was not Ishmael in his very weeping a very deep dissembler, the like never heard of?* We are not easily, therefore, to be persuaded of inward hearty affection from weeping and shedding of tears. This deceived the fourscore men which met Ishmael, and were most of them slain by him. Some can shed tears at will, and all weeping doth not come from the like cause, though many weep together, and in appearance have the same reason. There be that will weep for company, because they see others to weep, never inwardly moved from the cause, but most from the outward passion of the parties; yet, though there be a weeping not commendable, as that which is counterfeit, that which is upon every light occasion, or which is upon just cause, but in excess, yet it is sometime a matter praiseworthy, when it is from a natural affection, as in Joseph to his brethren and father; from sound love to a friend, as Jonathan's and David's weeping; and when it is from a gracious heart for a man's own sins, as Peter's weeping was; or for the sins of others, as David's, Ps. cxix.; Jeremiah's, chap. xiii; and Jesus Christ his weeping over Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41. Blessed are these mourners, for they shall be comforted; these tears are put into the Lord's bottle, Ps. lvi. 8. And such as be so doggedly hard-hearted, and want natural affection and sound love, so as neither for friend nor kinsman, nor the nighest of blood, they can weep for, are very unnatural, and worse than brute beasts which bleat and low for their own kind; so also they which can perhaps weep for the world, for departure of friends, for loss of parents, children, husband, or wife, yet not for sin, not for God's dishonour, not for the affliction of Joseph, not for the want of the word and the taking away of the righteous; are worldlings, are destitute of divine grace, of the true love of God and goodness; for men can and will mourn for such things as be ever near and dear unto them, and which they, indeed, take to heart.

*And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law.* As Naomi did by this act, in ver. 9, take her farewell of Orpah with Ruth, so now, Orpah departing, thus taketh leave of her. She wept in love, and kissed her in token of love and as loath to depart, yet voluntarily leaveth her, because she perceived, by Naomi her words, that she could not receive worldly contentment if she should go with her. So here were signs of love only, but not the truth of it. It is easy to make signs of love, but not to shew the true fruits of love. These be

* Acts and Mon., p. 773 a.

* That is, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Jer. xli.—ED.

chargeable, the other cost nothing, therefore they are afforded very cheap; and where only outward signs of love be, and not a hearty union, their worldly losses, or the fear of such losses, or not the hope to gain the things of this life, will soon separate such friends, as we see in this woman. Note further,

I. That worldly respects are great hindrances in the course of godliness. The world keepeth from the entertaining of the truth, Mat. xxii. 5; it hindereth in the receiving of it, Mat. xiii.; it pulleth men from it which have somewhat gone forward in it, as we may see here in Orpah, in Jehu, Judas, Demas, and Henry IV., the last king of France; and this cometh from the exceeding love of it, and our chiefest care for the body and the things of this life. But let us take heed of this world, for such as love it, the love of God the Father is not in them, 1 John ii. 15; and many for love of the world, forsaking religion, have felt the woe thereof, and have lost that which they loved. Remember Judas, he had the money, but what was he the better? It did not comfort him, neither did it continue with him, neither he long in the world. And yet, wretched caitiffs that we be, like Gadarenes, we will lose Christ rather than our swine; and with Eve, lose paradise for an apple.

II. That an unsound heart may for a time make a fair show in the way to Canaan, but yet turn back at the last, as Orpah doth here, and as we may see in Jehu, Judas, Demas, Hymeneus, Alexander, Philetus, and many other in all ages, falling back from the truth, which they indeed did never soundly love, and yet will such make so fair an entrance. And this is by reason, first, of certain general motions of religion, which maketh them in general to approve of the same; again, the general esteem of the very name of religion; all holding this, that it is a good thing to be religious, and that none can find fault with a man for that. Further, the working of the word, moving the heart in some sort to entertain it. And lastly, the desire of praise and good esteem with men: these will make hollow hearts to set on a while to heavenward, but shall not be able to enter. Therefore we are not easily to entertain men for sincere, because they have made, and do make, fair shows in religion for a time, seeing they may be unsound, and after fall away. And this should make us to examine our own hearts, lest secret hypocrisy lurk therein, and it break out at the length to our shame.

III. That such as want soundness towards God for religion, may yet have otherwise commendable parts in them. For Orpah is commended for a kind wife, as well as Ruth by Naomi, and for a kind daughter-in-law, ver. 8; and she shewed good humanity in going on the way with her mother-in-law, yea, a good natural affection in weeping so at parting. What shall I speak of Joab's valiant and hardy spirit, of the great wisdom of Ahithophel in all worldly affairs, and of moral men among the heathen? Many which had no part nor portion in Christ have done worthily in the things praiseworthy among men, by a restrained nature, by the power of conscience, from the law of nature written in their hearts, and by the common gifts of the Spirit. And therefore not to judge ourselves or others soundly religious and regenerate by God's Spirit, for our commendations in mere moral virtues, or common gifts of the Spirit; for the heathen have surpassed many true Christian hearts herein. And many by a mere civil education, and orderly bringing up in the laudable fashions of men, and good carriage of themselves, as men among men, attain to great commendations in and for their courtesy, affability, discretion, and many qualities in learning and arts, which they affect for praise with men, for their private profit, for advancement in the world; and not that they do good things for goodness' sake, from the power of grace and godliness in their hearts, which was as yet never engrafted in them, as appeareth by their little knowledge in the word of God, by their demeaning of themselves like statists, indifferently between two religions, by neglecting the examination of their ways by the word, but keeping company with all sorts alike, so far as worldly disgrace come not thereby, by never caring for the growth of religion in themselves or in others, to make the least opposition for it against the common stream. By all which, and by many good things wanting in them, as a holy zeal, fervency in prayer, the love of the truth for the truth's sake, and such as love it, delight in meditating of God's word, and conferring thereof; sorrow for the afflictions of God's people, and joy in the overthrow of the enemies thereof (which graces mere moralists are quite destitude of): we may see that the life of religion, and that heavenly light of true grace is not engrafted in them, which is more worth than all the rest, which yet are commendable; but these ought chiefly to be our praises, and yet not leave the other undone; for the one makes a man, but the other a Christian. And these together, I mean good carriage, and civil behaviour, learning, arts, and other good qualities, make an excellent Christian man.

*But Ruth clave unto her.* Though Orpah gave occasion for Ruth to fall off from Naomi, yet her example moved not. A well-grounded affection is not removed by the inconstancy of others, John vi. 68; for true love is fixed upon the thing beloved, and is not tied to any by-respects. Their love, then, is to be reproved, who fall off for company, their affections were never well settled; but Ruth's love was most firm; her person was, as it were, *glued* unto Naomi, as the force of the Hebrew word is, to be knit as man and wife inseparably. So the word is used, Gen. ii. 24, Mat. xix. 5. Thus should the love of God's people be one to another, hearty and constant.

Ver. 15. *And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is*

*gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.*

This is Naomi her last trial of Ruth; and these words shew plainly all was to try her, because she telleth Ruth of Orpah's going back, not only to her people, but also to her gods, which Naomi, a good woman, could not but hate, and could not so ill respect Ruth, and shew so great coldness in religion, and honour of the true God, as to dissuade Ruth from the same God of truth, to return unto idols.

This verse is an exhortation pretended then, but not intended, with the motive thereto propounded, which was the apostasy of Orpah, shewing what she was to Ruth, and whither she returned back.

*And she said.* Naomi, upon Orpah's departure, for further trial of Ruth, taketh her example, and propoundeth the same to her; for as she now saw Orpah's inconstancy for all her former resolution and tears, so she had hereby some cause to make further trial of Ruth this one time. The falls of some may justly bring others into the trial, though not wholly to doubt of their constancy. As if none could be good because some are bad; for some may fall from grace, when other may, through God's mercy, continue to the end.

*Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back.* These words shew, as soon as Orpah had kissed her mother-in-law, she went back; with whom, or with what company, is not mentioned. Of her sister-in-law, Ruth, she taketh no leave, as supposing she would come after; for we commonly judge others by ourselves, though we be deceived, as Orpah was of Ruth. In Orpah's leaving Naomi upon such light reasons, we see that a feeble heart, not truly settled, with weak reasons of worldly wants, is soon drawn from a right way of well doing. Silly were the reasons which Naomi used to put her to the proof, which sheweth that all her former words in ver. 10 were but a flourish, and were uttered more of a sudden passion than out of any settled resolution; yet this was not her only weakness, but she left it to posterity. For we may find her followers, such as upon light motions will soon turn from goodness, which shew that they are not settled truly in their affections before they begin, but lightly undertake the way towards heaven, as did Orpah to Canaan, and as easily give it over: a misery to be bewailed, and by a well-grounded resolution aforehand, to be prevented. Again, in this, that Naomi trieth Ruth with this her sister's example, saying, Behold, she is gone back, it teacheth that examples of kindred, friends, and old acquaintance, declining from goodness, are trials of others, to see whether they will abide, and, indeed, no small inducements to pull others after them. Adam was soon drawn by Eve; Rehoboam's heart was easily led after the advice of his familiars; the women of Judah, by their husbands, easily fell to idolatry, Jer. xliv. 19; which often is done upon foolish affection to those whom they follow, and not of judgment; sometime of fear to offend, sometime in flattery, sometime through an ignorant persuasion that others do well in that they do, especially if the example before them be of persons of place, learning, honour, and great for outward estate, for they fondly think that such cannot do amiss. Well, seeing examples are so forcible, let them be well examined before they be imitated, be the persons whatsoever; for precepts, and not examples, are rules to live by. Very excellent persons have often done amiss and gone out of the way; and as for kindred and acquaintance, we are not to love them before religion, Luke x. 52, 53, and xiv. 26, which should make a division between them and us if they take not the right way, and make us forsake them, remembering that one day God will divide acquaintances, Mat. xxiv. 40, 41, Luke xvii. 34. And if yet men will here stick to them in evil, and not willingly separate themselves, they shall then perish altogether, and too late wilt thou then repent, which wast led away with their company, complaining of thy folly, and curse the time that ever thou didst know them.

*Unto her people.* That is, to the Moabites, of whom she was, and among whom she was born. She was going to God's people, but she runneth back to idolaters, because she was of them; there born, as I say, and acquainted with them. It is hard to forsake our native country, where we are born and brought up. This may we see in Orpah, and in the mixed company which came out of Egypt; thither would they have returned again, though there they had lived in bondage; and this is first from a natural instinct in every one, even as the heathen man witnesseth.* Again, there is better hope, as is supposed, in wants to be relieved among friends, kindred, and acquaintance in their own country, than elsewhere in a strange place. And, lastly, the very thorough acquaintance and knowledge of the country, the people, their nature and conditions, and their own bringing up there like unto them, is a great means to keep the affection and heart towards the same; but from this, in case of religion, we must labour to wean ourselves, and follow Abraham, Heb. xi. 8, and religious proselytes, Hittai, and Uriah, with many others; yea, and of later times, blessed exiles from their native countries for the gospel's sake, considering that one day we must bid farewell to all the world.

*And to her gods.* This is a check unto Orpah: in which Naomi doth closely shew unto Ruth her sister's misery in going back, which was to worship idols and devils, with the people of her country, seeing she now had none to keep her back from the same. Hence note briefly,

I. That to leave God's people, to go to dwell among idolaters, is even to become an idolater; for the love

* Ovid, lib. i. de Ponto:—
Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos
Ducit, et immemores non sinit esse sui.

of idolaters will bring to the love of their idols. See it in Solomon, and in Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son; for such have daily provocations to that, which, indeed, they be of their own natures prone unto; and therefore the Lord did forbid his people to have any fellowship with the nations, lest they should become idolaters. Therefore let us not come among idolaters, if we would not be like them. We may not presume of our own strength, nor think by our groundedness in religion, to take our liberty to marry with them, to dwell with them, or long to travel among them; for we see daily by experience the vanity of this confidence.

II. That which the idolaters worship, that they take to be God, and so offer divine worship to it. This is plain by Naomi her speech, calling the idols of the Moabites *gods;* and we find that all idolaters gave to their idols the name of God. See this in wicked Jeroboam, 1 Kings xii. 28, and in the Israelites, Exodus xxxii. 8; and, therefore, we may here see the palpable blindness with which God striketh such, to make us avoid them, and yet bemoan them, as also to fear where such be, lest God's wrath seize upon us, for their so robbing the true God of his honour.

III. That idolaters have more gods than one, as these Moabites had Baal Peor, Num. xxv., and Chemosh, 1 Kings xi. The Grecians had thousands of gods, and the heathen Romans not a few; for leaving or not knowing the true God, they wander they know not whither; they have no certainty whereon to rest, they follow what they either imagine, or other do devise, or what by others' examples are practised before them. See it in the Israelites' forsaking the Lord, and in the idolatrous papists at this day; for idolatry is as whoredom, which maketh the adulterer to range abroad in unsatiable lust, not content with one, no, nor with many. No more do the spiritual adulterers rest with one false god, but are mad upon all they see, Ezek. xvi. 24, 25, 28. Oh, therefore, let us praise our God, who hath opened our eyes to see and know him, and hath delivered us from this miserable slavery of idolaters, who serve so many! They must needs be in great fear; for they be as servants serving many masters, all tyrants, and all of several qualities. How should they then ever rest in peace? Note before I conclude, how these Moabites, filthy idolaters, were the children of Lot, begotten in incest upon one of his own daughters in his drunkenness. Whence we may see, that the ill-begotten children of the godly are rather left under the curse of their fathers' sin, than made partakers of any of their virtues, as appeareth both in Moabites and Ammonites, and in Abimelech, the bastard son of Gideon; to shew the Lord's hatred of all filthiness in his people, and to strike fear into their hearts for offending this way. Let parents note this, to take heed they be not fathers of an unlawful issue, if it be not for their own sakes, yet for those they shall beget, whom they bring under a curse for their sin. Let bastards here learn to bewail their birth, and labour by a new birth according to the Spirit, to wipe out the stain of their parentage according to the flesh.

*Turn thee after thy sister-in-law.* This exhortation cannot be taken as seriously meant; for would Naomi persuade Ruth to idolatry, and turn her from going to God's people and the true God, to go to the society of idolaters and devils? We may not possibly think so uncharitably of her; and the 18th verse putteth it out of controversy, where it is said, When she saw Ruth stedfastly minded, she left off to speak, as having found out what she sought for, and till then she ceased not to make trial; for where just suspicion of unsoundness is, there trial may be made to the utmost till the doubt be removed: for this is not to beat the parties from goodness, but to see their unfeigned love of goodness, that they, being tried, may be well approved of. Let not any be offended, then, at such trials; for if thou beest sound, the oftener thou art brought to the touchstone, the more purer gold thou wilt appear to be.

Ver. 16. *And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God.*

Ruth's answer unto Naomi: wherein is her request unto her, and a reason expressing her full resolution, partly in this verse and partly in the next verse following.

*And Ruth said.* In this answer following, Ruth sheweth most plainly that she was of a very constant resolution, and not a whit moved with the scandal of her sister-in-law's departure, and leaving of her alone. For the well-settled souls are not to be removed from their resolution to do good, for any lets which Satan and his instruments may cast before them, and in their way. The wrath of Nebuchadnezzar cannot make the three children start back; the plots of princes against Daniel cannot make his heart to faint, neither to neglect to pray unto his God three times a-day; neither four hundred flatterers, nor fear of Ahab's wrath, can make Micaiah dissemble, nor halt in the message of the Lord. A world of wicked ones cannot make a righteous Noah the worse, nor corrupt righteous Lot in the midst of Sodom. They may vex him, but never gain him to their wickedness. What can afflictions work upon St Paul? Surely nothing: they may draw him nearer to God, but never pull such a one from God. Lastly, let backsliders revolt: will Orpah's example move Ruth? Will the falling away of some from Christ make the disciples to leave him? No, no; they are built on the rock, and not on the sand. Therefore we are not to fear their fall; they make God their strength, and he upholdeth them, so as none can pluck them out of his hands, John x. 27, 28.

*Entreat me not to leave thee.* These words may be read two ways: first, thus, 'Be not against me;'* and so reading, we learn, that they are against us who use reasons, or do exhort us to turn back from well-doing. Therefore Christ called Peter, *Satan*, that is, adversary, one that was against him, when he gave him counsel to do otherwise than his Father had appointed, and otherwise than according to the end he came for; and so should Eve have thought of the serpent's counsel, and Israel of Jeroboam's; for such withhold men from pleasing God, from the comfort of conscience, which is only gotten by well-doing, and from the hope of the blessed reward which is promised to well-doing. Let us then hold such for our adversaries, and not think as the men of the world do, who hold all their kind friends which any way pleasure the body, though they be adversaries to their souls, in hindering them in the way to life and salvation, by persuading them to pleasures unlawful, to unjust gain, to a false religion and idolatrous worship, as popery is; but, in these things, because they be blind and see not their harm, they therefore think not that such be against them, when yet there be no greater adversaries than these. The second reading is as it is translated, 'Entreat me not to leave thee;' and thus taking the words, we learn from this godly young woman, that the godly have a desire not to be hindered in a good course. Ruth was going from idolaters to the church of God, and was in love with Naomi, whom she would accompany thither, and would not be entreated to forsake her; no more would Elisha leave Elijah. The godly are like to Ahimaaz, who would not be let for running to David; for, indeed, they set their hearts on the Lord's ways, and have a full resolution to do well, by God's help, and do rejoice in the way of well-doing; and finding therein comfort, like Abraham's servant, will not be stayed, but do hasten home to their heavenly country. This grace let us labour for, to have a desire not to be hindered in a good course, nor to be withdrawn from good purposes, but stand fast in our honest resolutions; which, if indeed we do, then will we shew it: we will pray to God to further us, and to remove all lets that may hinder; we will check such as are against us, Mat. xvi. 23; we will prevent all hindrances, and betimes avoid the occasions which might draw us back, as did St Paul, Gal. i. 15; we will withstand the lets, as Paul also did, Acts xxi. 13; and as David did, when he had a mind to encounter Goliath; his brethren's contempt of himself, the Israelites' fear of Goliath, the words of Saul, nor the Philistine's greatness nor brags, could hinder him, he would follow his resolutions. So should we in all good things.

*Or to turn from following after thee.* As if she had said, Use no more words to hinder my honest intendment, but go on that I may follow thee; let my sister-in-law go to her people and gods too; her example moveth me not one whit, I will go with thee to thy people and to thy god. I have tasted by thee of true religion, the power whereof and thy virtues so bind me, as I can leave all, country, kindred, and friends, and old acquaintances, to follow thee, my mother. See here,

I. How religion and grace maketh such as be of several nations to love one another; to love foreigners, being religious, better than friends, kindred, and old acquaintance not religious. Ruth is in love with Naomi, a Jew, and esteemeth not of Orpah her countrywoman; for, indeed, religion maketh a more sure conjunction, in a more blessed kindred than nature, having God for our father, the church for our mother, the saints for our brethren, the Spirit of God for the bond of our union, which maketh us to desire to live and die together. Labour for this love, the love of the brethren, before natural love of friends not religious; for this is a true sign of our eternal salvation, and that we be translated from death to life, 1 John iii.

II. A heart truly in love with the godly, will not easily be removed to forsake them, by the falling away of others, as we may see by this example: by Jonathan's cleaving to David, and the disciples' continuing with Christ, though others forsook him, John vi. And this is, because their love is well grounded; for they know the godly to be in their persons honourable; how basely soever the slaves of Satan esteem of them, they know them to be kings and priests unto God. They discern of their graces, and are in love with them for the same; yea, they having the same Spirit, do by the force thereof knit themselves to them, and do know that their end is happiness, Ps. xxxvii. 37, whatsoever their present estate be in this vale of misery. Let us cleave then to these, though others do fall away; and that we may so do, let us not take offence at their weaknesses and frailties, but consider of their love with God, of their excellent graces, and how that Holy Spirit of God dwelleth in them, that they be such as be co-heirs with Christ, and shall reign with him in glory.

*For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge.* This is the reason of Ruth's request to Naomi, from her resolution, which is, not to forsake her company, but to go with her, and to lodge with her, wheresoever she shall lodge; this is her resolution, which made her continue with Ruth,* and not start back. Whence note, that the putting on of a strong resolution will make one withstand all oppositions and hindrances which may lie in the way to be lets from well-doing. This made Micaiah to do faithfully the Lord's message, 2 Kings xxii. This made St Paul to go on to Jerusalem without daunt of spirit, Acts xx. 24, with xxi. 31; for a grounded resolution is such a settling of thy heart as it cannot easily be removed. Let us therefore put on this resolution in making an onset to goodness, and in every good action, seeing there may be many hindrances in the way; and

* Trem. Junius, Montan. So in the margin of the new translation.

* Qu. 'Naomi'?—ED.

to do this, that our hearts start not back, we must make our resolution strong by these things; we must see that the thing we take in hand be good and lawful, then whether lawful to us, and what calling we have thereto. Thirdly, to weigh the circumstances of time and place, so that it may be done seasonably and fitly. This is prudence, which will much commend the deed. Fourthly, note with ourselves the end, God's glory, public good, discharge of our duty, and beware of sinister respects. Lastly, forecast all rubs which may happen in the way, for such foresight forewarneth, and he which is fore-warned is half armed, and will not repent with an *Had I wist*, neither will be moved with such lets, Acts xx. 14. Note again from hence, that Ruth exceptcth not against any condition which may befall Naomi; but will go with her, and take such part as she taketh, whether the lodging be good or bad, whether the place be comfortable or otherwise, whither Naomi shall go. Which example telleth us, that such as truly love the godly both can and will give themselves to them, to accompany them in every estate, not only in prosperity, but in adversity, as did Moses; because they know that God is with them, Zech. viii. 23, they account themselves one, and are of one heart; and having given themselves to the Lord, they cannot but give themselves to his people, 2 Cor. viii. 5. And therefore, if we do love the godly, keep them company, and forsake them not in their adversity.

*Thy people shall be my people.* She loveth a good woman, her mother-in-law Naomi, and thereby giveth herself to the love of all God's people; for they that love one godly person for godliness' sake, cannot but affect all the Lord's flock; for there is the like reason to all as to one in that respect; and the same Spirit that uniteth the heart of one godly person to another, uniteth the same to all the rest, as being together members of Christ's mystical body. This may try our true love to every godly person, by our true love upon the same ground to all the rest; for else that particular love will not be found to be other than sinister. David's delight was not in one saint, but 'in the saints that dwell upon the earth.' True it is, that by a private familiarity and particular acquaintance with one more than another, the love may more shew itself, as in reason it must and will; yet such a love upon occasion will truly shew itself to all others, which are united in the profession of the same truth, and will be ready to do them good when such are known, as it ever doth wish you well, before there be any acquaintance at all. And if one godly person by a virtuous life may not only procure love to him or herself, but also to all other of God's people, this should make us so to demean ourselves, every one of us, as we may so win others to us, as also the same persons unto the rest which fear God, for the increase of God's kingdom, and so the hastening of Christ's appearing.

*And thy God my God.* As she leaveth her own people, being idolaters, for God's people, so she renounceth her idols for the true God; for they which truly for godliness' sake embrace God's people, cannot but then entertain the true God and leave their idols, 1 Thes. i. 6, 9, as Ruth did here, and Rahab also; because the love of godliness in men ariseth from the love of God himself, the author of that goodness in his people. The Corinthians gave first themselves to the Lord, then to his servants, 2 Cor. viii. 5; and Zechariah, chap. viii. 23, foretelleth that the heathen having heard of the Lord to be among the Jews, they will then come and desire to be with them. Try our love to the godly by a sound entertainment of their religion, else the love is but carnal, worldly, or counterfeit; for in differing religions, there neither is nor can be any true concord, 2 Cor. vi. 14; and therefore let us not think that either idolaters, atheists, or irreligious persons can be any faithful lovers of the truth. Note again, that godly persons may, by their godliness, draw others unto the embracing of the true God, either by instruction or by a holy conversation, or rather both together, Mat v. 16, 1 Peter iii. 1, and ii. 11. And therefore let us labour by our godliness in doctrine and life, so to set forth the Lord's praises as we may gain others unto him. This is our duty, Mat. v. 16; this is Christian-like carriage which becometh well the saints; this will win souls to God, and so cover the multitude of sins, be an advancement to the Lord's name, and bring comfort to our own souls in the day of Jesus Christ. It may be some will ask, Whether for mere love to the person of any, if one entertain religion, he may be justified in so doing? Surely no. One may occasion another, or be a motive thereto, and so perform a good office on his part; but religion is to be beloved and embraced for itself, and not for man's sake. The person on whom a man relieth may die or turn back from the truth, and become such a ground as the sand, on which a house being built, soon decayeth, and the fall thereof is great.

Ver. 17. *Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*

Ruth continueth her speech to Naomi, touching her resolution, which she had begun to shew in the former verse; and in this confirmeth it with an oath, so that Naomi need not doubt of her constancy.

*Where thou diest.* Ruth speaketh of her mother's death, and also of her own. It is a principle in nature to know and to be persuaded that all shall die, Job xxi. 33, Heb. ix. 27, 1 Kings ii. 1, Joshua xxiii. 14, 1 Cor. xv. 51, Eccles. vii. 2 and vi. 6, for death goeth over all, inasmuch as all have sinned, Rom. 5. Then let all prepare to die at one time or another, which stands in seeking reconciliation with God in Christ, and in endeavouring to keep a good conscience before God and man, Acts xxiv. 16, waiting the time of dissolution, which the men of pleasure,

as Dives; the worldly-minded, as the rich man; the drowsy protestant, like the five foolish virgins, and such as go on securely, as those in the old world, and in Sodom, Mat. xxiv. 37–39, do not. All know they must die, yet most neglect to prepare to die, and to provide for themselves a better habitation, which men on earth will do, when they know they must out of their dwellings; they will not be to seek to the very day in which they know they shall be put out.

*I will die.* I mean to end my days with thee, my mother; I will not return again into my country, but will make my end in what place soever thou shalt die. The true love of the godly one towards another is a continuing and enduring love to death. So was the love of these two, and the love of Jonathan and David, 2 Sam. i. 26, because their love is not grounded upon temporary and mere worldly respects, as the love of others be; nor upon mere nature, as that of parents and children; but upon such reasons as the alteration of outward estate here cannot disannul, or make void. They love one another for their graces in heavenly respects, and therefore by a spiritual bond they are united in heart, and made one. Thus should we love, and thus settle it, that it may abide to death; and that we may so love, let us remember, that we be children of one Father, we be brethren, we be very members of the same body, and Christ Jesus our head, we also are here strangers; and if we love not one another, who will love us? for the world hateth us, John xv. 19. There be which would be held Christians, and yet cannot love such as be so indeed. Cain cannot love Abel, though his brother, nor Esau a Jacob. Some profess to love the godly, but it is sinisterly, not simply for their graces and virtues, as Ruth here loved Naomi, for no other cause of love could there be; for Ruth was young, and Naomi old, and very poor. What power in natural and worldly reason could then lead Ruth thus to love Naomi? Other some love them for their virtues, but their virtues must be such as must make their persons without exception every way pleasing to them, else they will fall off from their love; they cannot, forsooth, bear with infirmities, all must be in perfection. But such do not look into themselves with a single eye, or else with too much self-love behold themselves; for otherwise they would love a godly Christian, as such a one, though accompanied with some infirmities, from which in this life none can be wholly freed.

*And there will I be buried.* Ruth spoke before of their death, and now of their burial together; so as neither in life nor death she would be separated from her mother. By this it appeareth,

I. That burial was a duty performed to the dead then as now, and therefore she speaketh of it as hoping that it would be performed to them, as men always have done one for another successively: Abraham for Sarah; Isaac and Ishmael for Abraham their father; so Esau and Jacob for Isaac. Yea, we read how God himself buried Moses; and with what solemnities burials were performed, we may see by the embalming of Jacob, and his carrying into Canaan with such troops, and the mourning there made for him divers days. The godly would not neglect this to John Baptist beheaded, to Christ crucified, and to Stephen stoned. It is humanity, it is an honest and good respect unto the dead, and done by believers also in the hope of the resurrection. It was esteemed a mercy to be buried, and the contrary was threatened as a punishment, as we may see in 1 Kings xiii. 30, 2 Kings ix. 22, and xxii. 20, Deut xxviii. 26, Jer. xviii. Yet we must know, that a Dives may be buried with pomp, and yet go to hell; and a poor Lazarus be exalted to heaven, yea, many saints and martyrs drowned, torn of beasts, and burnt to ashes, yet received the crown of glory, which I speak to shew, that although the godly should want burial, yet that hindereth not their happiness.

II. We may see hence, that the godly and loving friends have an affection to be buried together. Jacob would lie where Abraham was buried; and the old prophet would have his bones laid by the other prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 31. And it was in former times an honour to be buried in the sepulchre of their fathers, 2 Sam. xix. 37. And therefore the loving affection of such is not to be blamed as altogether idle and foolish, which desire to be buried by their beloved friends, especially if they were godly and virtuous.

*The Lord do so to me, and more also.* When Ruth saw Naomi so earnest to have her to return back, as she thought, for her better satisfaction and assurance, she thus breaketh forth into this speech, ascertaining her that her words came from a true affection and a constant resolution of her heart. This is a form of an oath among the Hebrews; for so it is said that Solomon swore, 1 Kings ii. 23. And thus swore Saul, 1 Sam. xiv. 44; Jonathan, 1 Sam. xx. 13; and Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 9; and David, 2 Sam. xix. 13; but it is not a bare oath, but an execration withal, 1 Sam. iii. 17. Yet is not the curse particularly named, but left unto God. Hence we learn,

I. That it is lawful to take an oath, Heb. vi. 13, Rev. x. 6; it is warranted, Deut. vi., and a part of God's worship which he will give to none other; it is necessary sometime to decide a controversy, as Exod. xxii. 11, and to give satisfaction and assurance to the mind of others, in great and necessary matters which otherwise would not be credited, as here; therefore the anabaptists err, which hold it altogether unlawful; for it is lawful to swear, being thereto called before a a magistrate. So Abraham made his servant to swear, Gen. xxiv., and Asa made his subjects to take an oath, 2 Chron. xv.; so Ezra, chap. x., and Nehemiah, chap. xiii. It is lawful to swear for confirmation of a truth in weighty matters one to another, as the spies swore to Rahab; David and Jonathan, one to another; David to Bathsheba; Ruth here to Naomi; and Saint

Paul did often call God to witness, for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the gospel. We may therefore lawfully take an oath, so it be *in truth*, not a lie, not with an equivocation, or mental reservation to deceive; *in righteousness*, that the matter be just; and *in judgment*, knowing well the thing, and upon mature deliberation and settled persuasion of the truth. Beware of common and usual swearing; the custom thereof maketh it worse, and proclaimeth the man to be unreformed in his heart, yea, though the thing be true which he sweareth. A man should be so honest, and his word in such esteem, as his oath should not need in ordinary matters; and as we must take heed of common swearing, so when we are to swear, let it be in truth, righteousness, and judgment; take heed of perjury, which God will revenge, Ezek. v.; yea, he sweareth to revenge it, Ezek. xvii. 16, 19.

II. That the godly, when they swear, they swear by God; if they do otherwise, it is their fault. When the angel sware, Rev. x. 6, it was by God; so was the oath of David, Jonathan, and others. We are taught by God himself to swear by himself, Heb. vi. and this will give satisfaction; for that God can bear witness, and the calling of him to witness, worketh a credit in the party to whom another doth swear: such is the reverence of God's name in men's hearts. He can revenge perjury, and it is his will that we should swear only by him, Deut. iv. 10, Exod. xxiii. We are not therefore to swear by false gods, as did Jezebel by her gods, 1 Kings xix., Josh. xxiii. 7, Ps. xvi. 4, Zeph. i. 5; nor by them that are no gods, Jer. v. 7, Amos viii. 14; nor by the creatures, Mat. v. 35, 36; for such swearers take God's honour from him, and make these things by which they swear idols; they break the Lord's commandment, and provoke God's wrath against them. Ruth, a new convert, would not swear by the idols of her country; for if she had, it would not have satisfied Naomi, and she had shewed that she had not been converted to the true God; whereas now she declared that she worshipped the true God.

III. That every oath is with an execration, either understood or expressed, as here in general terms, and elsewhere they are conjoined, Neh. x. 29; for an oath is a calling of God to witness in a matter, so to bless him if he speak truth, or to plague him if he speak the contrary. This should make men take heed how they do swear, lest they bring a curse upon themselves, as Zedekiah, and Vladislaus king of Hungary, and Rodolphus duke of Suabia, when he rebelled against Henry the emperor, his lord and master, by the instigation of Pope Gregory the Seventh.

IV. That in imprecations and forms of cursing, it is best to pass over with silence the special kind of the judgment, and not to name it, but to leave that to God, as Ruth doth here, and Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 23, Saul, Jonathan, Abner, Eli, and others; and not to say, as now many will, I pray God I may never stir; that I may be hanged; that this bread and drink may never go through me; that I may be damned; that the devil may fetch me; and a thousand of such fearful wishes, too boldly uttered from a presumptuous spirit, not fearing the terror of God, especially when we do consider what dreadful examples there have been of this kind, that even as men have wished, so hath the judgment fallen out,* and therefore let us not be rash with our mouths herein, lest the Lord make us examples of his justice.

*If aught but death part thee and me.* This is that which she sealeth with an oath, even to be constant to death, and this is the praise of her action. Many can begin well, but they hold not on to death, as did this Ruth. Of constant love I have spoken before. Not further, that though nothing else can, yet death will divide friends asunder; therefore Ruth doth not except against anything but death, which cannot be avoided. This will separate Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel, Aaron and Moses, Jonathan and David, and this Ruth from Naomi, but nothing else shall, so firmly are faithful friends united and made one. I will not complain here of the levity of this age, of the inconstancy of men's hearts, and how for every trifle they that seemed to be one become two of a sudden; they will prevent death, and sever themselves before. But so much shall suffice for this verse, and the constant resolution of Ruth.

Ver. 18. *When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left off speaking unto her.*

Here is the force and effect of Ruth's resolution upon Naomi, and withal the very drift of Naomi her speeches to Ruth, concerning her going back, only for trial of her constancy, which, when she saw, she ceased to speak thereof any more unto Ruth. So as here is to be noted, first, the silence of Naomi; secondly, the cause thereof. This is in the first place, the other followeth in the last words of the verse.

*When she saw.* That is, when she perceived her full resolution, then she admitted of her fellowship, but not before; whence, and from whose wisdom we learn, that the godly wise are wary in their admittance of others into their company, till they well know them. We see the wisdom of Nehemiah, chap. vi. 2, 11, 12; of Jacob, when Esau offered him kindness; and of David towards Saul: though he both wept and spoke him fair, he kept off from him. Neither would our Saviour commit himself to all his followers, John ii. 24, for man's heart is deceitful, and a show may be made of that which is not in the heart indeed. Therefore should we learn Christ's counsel, to be as wise as serpents, with a dove's innocency, lest like a well-meaning Gedaliah, without suspicion of evil in others, because we intend none evil in ourselves, we perish by hypocritical Ishmaels, Jer. xli. 6. Let us in these fraudulent times try, know, and to approve and admit, or dislike and leave men.

* See the book called the *Theatre of God's Judgments.*

*That she was stedfastly minded to go with her.* This is it which held Ruth's stedfast spirit; she was not of a light and unstable heart. But how saw Naomi this in her? By Ruth's constant abiding by her promise expressing her mind, and by her solemn oath confirming the same promise. So then, words with an oath, and actions agreeing, sufficiently may persuade us of the stedfastness of the heart, and the inward disposition of the mind of such as shew themselves virtuous. And with this should we rest satisfied, as Naomi doth here, as it followeth in the next words, for charity bindeth us to think the best of such testimonies, of promises, oaths and actions concurring. True it is, that all these may be feigned, for wicked men will promise, swear, and in some sort do, but yet not so as they be free from guile therein; they will promise what they truly intend not; they will swear, to be the better credited, and less distrusted, even when they mean to deceive, because they fear not God; and in some things they will be doing, in such things as may rather delude than indeed effect what they pretend, but not what they secretly intend. Such Machiavellians, or rather matchless villains, there be in the world. But I spake before of such as fear God, who are to be believed, when they take an oath to shew the truth of the heart, in that which they do speak. But that we may rest satisfied with an oath, we must observe these things in the party; first, see to his life, whether such a one fear God: then, whether he make conscience of an oath, or be an ordinary swearer, not regarding an oath; and thirdly, what doth make him to swear, whether it be hope of gain, some coming towards him, or fear, or some sudden passion, and not a religious ground; as these concur, so may we believe or doubt. The words translated *was stedfastly minded*, are in Hebrew, *she strengthened herself*, to wit by her oath. By which we may learn that an oath is the strengthening of the mind of him that sweareth, to do that which he hath sworn to do, if it be lawful, and that the oath was not rashly taken. Thus Elijah strengthened himself not to leave Elisha till he was taken up, and Micaiah to perform faithfully his ministry, before and unto Ahab, when he came thither, where he was. And this is lawful sometime in great and weighty affairs; wherein we may fear the fainting of our hearts, then with prayer to God to vow our obedience, and if just cause require, to witness by oath our resolution, as Ruth doth here, and the rest before named. But when we have sworn lawfully, then let us look to it that we do not break it, Ps. xv. Josh. ix. 19, for God will require it at our hand, except it be like Herod's oath; it is then better broken, and to be repented of, rather than kept.

*Then she left speaking unto her.* To wit, of her returning back again, and of willing her to go after Orpah unto her own country and people; and she left off because she saw that Ruth was resolved to go with her, without sinister and by respects, for that Ruth could not, by such reasons as she had laid before her, be made to depart from her, being an old poor woman and stranger, albeit Orpah did leave her. So then hence note, that there is no reason to make further trial where an honest resolution is, or may be well discerned; for this were folly, and also uncharitableness, to call still into question that which is out of question, and to suspect an honest mind, which fully sheweth itself as far as it can for the present. Let us, then, learn this wisdom, so to try before we trust, and then to trust after sound trial; for this is the end thereof. Again, where we see the mind settled to well-doing, let us not put it to further trial than need is, lest we do weaken the party's faith, and bring the mind into wavering, but leave him to his honest resolution, Acts xxi. 14, 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

Ver. 19. *So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them; and they said, Is this Naomi?*

In the sixth verse they took their journey, and after stood parleying by the way; now they go forward till they came to the end thereof; so as here is shewed how long they did journey, and whither, and then what was the event when they came there.

*So they two went until they came to Bethlehem.* When Naomi had tried her, she took her to her; and so she, poor woman, returneth unto her country, left of all except this one. She was forsaken, but not of all; one goeth with her, and they two poor women go together, and left not off till they did come unto Bethlehem. Whence observe,

I. That they are to be admitted into our fellowship, whom we find to be constant in a good course, and true lovers of goodness, whatsoever they were before. Naomi thus admits of Ruth, no doubt, with great comfort. Thus Paul alloweth of Mark, 2 Tim. iv. 11, though before he had refused him, Acts xv. 38, and willeth others to entertain him, Col. iv. 10, 11. For thus God's angels deal with us; they will account us their fellow-servants when we turn to God, though before we were never so lewd; yea, they will rejoice over us, and will lovingly attend us. Let us then admit of such, as God also himself doth accept of us.

II. That God leaveth not his in distress, or altogether comfortless. Naomi went out with husband and children, and lost them; she returneth not alone, but God sent her one to accompany her, and to comfort her. And where man's company to help and comfort faileth, there God will send his angels, as with Jacob in his travel to Mesopotamia, and with the three children in the furnace; yea, God will stand by Paul, when all men forsake him, 2 Tim. iv., because he knoweth our frailty and weakness, and therefore will not leave his altogether comfortless, that their faith should not fail; which to think upon, is not a small comfort unto God's people in their affliction and troubles.

III. That a true resolution will shew itself in a full execution. She resolved to go with Naomi, and so she did, till she came to Bethlehem. Jacob vowed, and so resolved in his return from Mesopotamia, to build an altar to God at Bethel, and so he did, Gen. xviii. and xxxv. Yet this is so to be understood, if forcible impediments hinder not, as we may see in Paul's will to go to the Thessalonians, which yet he did not then, because Satan hindered him, 1 Thes. ii. 18. By this may we learn to know the difference between solid resolutions and sudden flashes, raw and undigested purposes, between true resolutions and such as be made in show, but in substance prove nothing so, never seen in the effects.

IV. In this their travel to Canaan, and therein to Bethlehem, note three things: their unity, fervency, and constancy. They went together lovingly, they ceased not to go on, they did not linger, they took no by-paths, neither forgat they whither they were going, till they came unto Bethlehem in Canaan. As these thus went to Canaan, so should we unto the spiritual Canaan and heavenly Bethlehem; we must go in unity, 1 Cor. i. 10, and be of one heart, Acts i. 14, and ii. 1, 46, and iv. 24, in a godly fervency, Rom. xii. 11, Titus ii. 14, Ezek. iii. 14, as Elijah, Nehemiah, the angel of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 1, 2, and as our Saviour, whom the zeal of God's house had eaten up. And we must go in a constant spirit, and not be weary of well-doing, Gal. vi., for 'he that continueth to the end shall be saved.'

To conclude the observations from these words, note how Bethlehem, the house of bread, yea, Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, and no lack in it, Deut. vii. 8, 9, and xi. 9, 11, 12, and xxvii. 3, was made so barren, as Naomi was fain to go into Moab for relief, and yet now is made fruitful again, answerable to the name. Whence see how the Lord can make a fruitful land barren, Ps. cvii. 33, 34, for the sins of the people, and again can turn barrenness into plenty, of his mercy and goodness, vers. 35, 36. Therefore, to have the continuance of God's mercies, take heed of sin; when we enjoy them, praise him for them, and when we be in scarcity, seek to him, because God can help; Ps. lxv. 10–12, and he hath promised to give a blessing, Isa. xli. 17, 18, 2 Chron. vii. 14, and beware of murmuring in want, 1 Cor. x., remember there the judgment; yet is this a common thing amongst us now-a-days, upon any unseasonable weather, or worldly crosses, to repine, which yet easeth us nothing, but doth the more provoke God to punish us.

*And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem.* These words are a repetition of the former words immediately before. Thus plainly speaketh the Holy Ghost, declaring the matter not in curiousness of speech, but in evidence of the truth.

*That all the city was moved about them*; that is, all the inhabitants of the city. A figurative speech, as in Mat. ii. 3, there was a general coming together to see them. Such a moving is sometime for fear, Mat. ii. 3, sometime for joy, 1 Kings i. 45, Mat. xxi. 10, and of a wonderment, Acts ii. 6. All this noteth that Naomi was not an obscure person before, but a woman of fame before she went; and therefore was this observation of her return, when she now was come to Bethlehem. By which we may understand that the more renowned any be in prosperity, the more remarkable are they in a downfall and in adversity. This experience sheweth to be true among ourselves, by very late instances, for the eminency of such in prosperity have the eyes of many upon them, friends, enemies, equals; one sort looks on with love, another with hatred, the last with envy and disdain; and as they be affected in a man's days of prosperity, so will they speak and shew fully themselves in adversity. This should make such as be set out so to the view of men, to behave themselves wisely in every estate, seeing they be so observable.

*Is this Naomi?* There be three opinions of this, and it may be, that the company being mixed, and of all sorts, they might speak the same words, but with differing minds. Some think the words spoken in contempt, *Is this Naomi!* She was so fair and full, is she now brought down? If this may stand, we see, that poverty bringeth contempt even upon the the best. So was Job contemned by base fellows, chap. xxx. 1, 11. So was David of Nabal, of Shimei, yea, our Saviour upon the cross. Solomon speaketh of the poor as subject to scorn and contempt, Prov. xvii. 5, and xix. 4, which cometh through the want of heavenly wisdom, Prov. xi. 12, the want of God's fear, Job vi. 14, and because men in prosperity are proud, and do sinisterly interpret of such as be in adversity. Doth adversity bring contempt? Then let us take heed how by our own prodigality, folly, and wickedness, we bring evil upon ourselves; if it be the immediate hand of God, and not thy fault, thou shalt be censured, as Job was, how much more when the cause is apparently from thyself? Again, let men in adversity prepare to bear contempt, and not be impatient, nor take it to heart, for Job, David, Christ Jesus suffered it patiently. If men learn not patience in this, it will make them lay violent hands upon themselves, as Saul, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4, who could not endure contempt, and therefore would prevent it by killing himself; for impatient proud hearts take contempt in adversity, to be worse to them than death itself. Indeed, to mock or despise the miserable, is an argument of the want of God's fear, and that such are uncharitable, cruel, and void of mercy, for whom there remaineth judgment merciless; yet howsoever the wickedly proud behave themselves, we must in adversity be content.

Some think the words to be spoken with admiration, *Is this Naomi!* as if it had been said, Oh what an alteration is here! And so taking the words, we learn,

that strange alterations in men's estates make people to wonder, whether it be in prosperity or adversity, for good or evil in any quality. The wise and learned friends of Job were astonished at the change of his estate. Saul's conversion was wondered at, 1 Sam. x. 11. So the gifts of the apostles and miracles, Acts ii. 7, and iv. 13, and Christ's wisdom and learning, being but twelve years old; for men are more carried away with the consideration of the outward means how things came to pass, than of the power and pleasure of God to make such an alteration. Therefore in great alterations look for wonderings, and take no offence thereat, for it is man's nature so to do at unusual things; yea, it is a certain corruption and folly in the vulgar sort, who consider not the causes of things. It could not but somewhat move Naomi, to see such a concourse of people, to come to wonder and gaze upon them, as people do at strangers, or at others in a changeable estate, even among ourselves. But these follies of people we must pass by.

Some think the words to be uttered from pity and commiseration towards her, as if it had been said, *Is this Naomi?* Alas! what a change is in her? This is that good woman Naomi, whom we cannot yet forget, though in her estate she be much altered. And it is most like they spake in love and compassion, rather than in contempt, because she was the kinswoman of the chiefest man among them, who, it seemeth, esteemed much of her, for he entertained Ruth kindly for her sake, chap. ii. 6, 11, and sent her corn, chap. iii. 17; likewise the women spoke very comfortably to her, chap. iv. 14, 16. Neither doth Naomi tax them for contemning her, but rather answereth to their esteem of her name from her former estate; and therefore this being uttered from their love and pity, and good respect towards her, as being a grace fit for God's people to shew to them which are in adversity, we learn, that good and godly people do nothing less esteem of the virtuous for their outward low estate and poverty. These call her still Naomi, and so acknowledge her; and Boaz esteemed well of her, even in this poor estate. Jonathan did nothing less esteem of David because he was out of the king's favour, neither did Joseph of Arimathea less reverence or honour Jesus Christ because he was condemned and executed as a malefactor among thieves; for outward crosses, afflictions, and miseries of this life, are no stain to true piety, when the crosses fall upon good men for righteousness' sake, or for the trial of their faith and patience, Let us not, then, for outward adversity, like the godly worse when we have loved them, or made show of love in their prosperity, but in adversity shew greater tokens of love; and do not as Job's friends, sit down and censure him, nor as Christ's friends and St Paul's, which forsook them in their troubles. An healthful member of the body is beloved, but when it is in distress, then love of all the rest of the members most sheweth itself; and should not our love appear to the godly in adversity, which be members with us of the same body in Christ?

Ver. 20. *And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.*

This is Naomi her answer unto the multitude flocking about her, calling her Naomi, containing a dissuasion for so calling her, and shewing what name they should give her, with the reason thereof drawn from her present poor estate, which she setteth out partly in this verse and partly in the next.

*And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi.* This name signifieth *pleasant* and merry, which in her adversity she thought did not befit her, and therefore she did not rejoice in it. Adversity maketh the afflicted nothing to regard worldly names and titles of a better condition and estate, while they be in misery, and have lost their former outward comforts, if they be wise and truly humbled, for such as be humbled indeed are not vainly in love with goodly names and titles to which their estate is not answerable. Which checketh the foolish pride of such as being in a base beggarly condition, living almost of alms, hanging upon this and that friend, yet, forsooth, will brag of their name, their house, and gentility; or rather, indeed, to call it, as they make it, gentilism, through their lewd and vain conversation.

*Call me Mara.* That is, *bitter*, one in a heavy and distressed estate. The truly humbled desire to be accounted as they be, and not as they be not, as Naomi here is willing to be called *Mara*, because her estate was answerable. She was not proud, she submitted herself to God's hand, and therefore she refused not a name according to the nature of her present condition. Whose humility may check the pride of such as would have better names than they deserve, seeking the name of *goodman*, when goodness is far from them; of *master*, when their gentlemanship did hardly creep out of a dunghill; of *worshipful*, *esquire*, *right worshipful*, and many such vain titles, which every upstart now in these days do eagerly affect, not for any desert of virtue, but for that they have gotten some money to put to usury, or procured some office basely by their money, or a little better outward estate by illiberal and base scraping, pinching, and niggardly sparing, or by depending upon some person in authority, by whose countenance they may domineer over their poor neighbours, or by some such way and means whereof this now present age affordeth instances enow; yet are such far enough off from the true causes of gentry, worship, and due honour. This good woman's humility and patience may also check the pride and impatience of such as cannot endure a name like their nature; they can be content to be usurers, but not so to be called; they can live as misers, but will not so be accounted; the denomination from their sinful practices is worse to them than

the sins which they do commit, for that they more are touched with the shame of the evil before men than with the offence thereby committed against God. Here, it may be demanded, whether any may be called by any other name than formerly they have been called by? We see here that Naomi would be called *Mara;* Jacob was after called *Israel;* Abram, *Abraham;* Sarai, *Sarah;* and many such instances in Scripture, as Saul called after *Paul*, and Joseph called *Barsabas*, Acts i. 23, which may be to express some grace in them for which they be praiseworthy, as Jacob being called *Israel* because he wrestled and prevailed with God; so Joses called *Barnabas*, 'the son of consolation,' Acts iv. 36, for his rare love to the church, and for giving such an example thereof to the apostles. Simon must be called *Peter* for his constancy; so to express some notorious evil, on the other side Barjesus was called *Elymas*, Acts xiii. 6, 8, and Pashur, Jer. xx. 3, must be named *Magor-missabib.* And we see by ancient practice for greater honour men were called by other names than from their fathers' families, which they purchased as a title of their honour, and for the reward of virtue, to encourage men to noble achievements worthy of honour,* being by others put upon them for the praise of their virtues, without flattery and vain glory; and some names also were invented for disgrace of vice in such as deserved the same, but they also without scorn, derision, malice, and evil will to the party, otherwise than to beat him out from his sin, which may not be for such sin as he committeth of infirmity, but for open and notorious enormities, and from which he will not be hardly reclaimed without some note of infamy.

*For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.* The reason why she would be called Mara, because of her bitter affliction which the Lord Almighty hath laid upon her. Whence we may learn these lessons,

I. That the Lord is almighty, Gen. xvii. 1, for he can do what he will in heaven and in earth, Ps. cxv. 3. This should work confidence in his word, for what he saith he will do he can do, his power can effect it. This must make us humble ourselves under his mighty hand, 1 Peter v. 6; he is able to destroy and cast into hell, Mat. x. 28. By this let us be encouraged to do what he commandeth, for he can bear us out in it, and can supply our wants, 2 Cor. ix. 7, 8. Hence may we gather comfort against all that rise up against us for the Lord's cause, for he is greater than all, John x. 29. And we may, to conclude, learn to hope well of others, though they have long gone astray, for God is able to save them, Rom. xi. 23.

II. That the Almighty can alter an estate into the clean contrary, as Naomi into Mara, mirth into mourning, sweet into sour, honour into dishonour; and contrarily, heaviness into joy, disgrace into high esteem, and so forth; as we may see in Job's downfall, and also raising up again; in Haman's honour into extreme contempt, in Mordecai's base estate into great dignity; so in Joseph's exaltation likewise, and in many others; for every man's estate is in the Lord's hand, to alter it at his will, 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8. Let none be proud in their prosperity, for God can cast them down. See it in Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Herod, whom God made spectacles of his displeasure for abusing their prosperity, as we have examples of late among ourselves. And as prosperity should not make us proud, because God can cast us down, so adversity should not make us despair, because God can raise us up, as he did Job, Joseph, and Mordecai.

III. That the godly feel a bitter taste in their afflictions; they are distasteful unto them, 1 Pet. i. 7; for no affliction is joyous for the present, Heb. xii. 11, which maketh infirmities appear in the best in time of their troubles, as we may see in Job, Jeremiah, chap. xx. 12, 14, 15, and Hannah, 1 Sam. i. For none even of the saints of God are perfect in faith, love, patience, and other virtues, which might make us endure afflictions quietly; and therefore we are not to marvel when we hear words of impatience come from weak men, nor sit down and censure them, but to judge charitably, though they cannot bear afflictions altogether with cheerfulness, quietly, and without struggling. For though the spirit be willing, yet flesh and blood are weak, and even the best manifest their weakness, and the bitter taste which they have of affliction.

Ver. 21. *I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?*

Naomi goeth on in her speech to the people, so speaking of her as is before noted; first shewing how the Lord had dealt bitterly with her, and then why they should not call her *Naomi*, for that the Lord had testified against her, and afflicted her. Thus she complaineth, and amplifieth the same by contraries.

*I went out full.* She here speaketh of her former estate, when she went from among God's people. The word is taken from a full vessel; and this is to be understood of her outward estate, in which she felt no want, no more than there is want in a full vessel; for she had an husband and two sons, and no doubt other things sufficient; for the words imply she went not for want, but for fear of want. If the words be understood of her fulness in her husband and children, it noteth that a good woman feeleth no want while she hath a loving husband and obedient children, for she taketh such contentment in them, as she cannot feel want, neither will such an husband and children see her to want. When women are thus happy, let them bless God for their full estate. If the words be understood of fulness for outward things withal, and yet could not abide at home, we may learn that in present

* As with the Romans—*Cato Censorinus, Scipio Africanus, Æmilius Macedonicus, Antoninus Pius*, &c.

fulness and plenty there may want contentment, either through a greedy desire which never hath enough, Eccles. iv. 8, or through a distrustful heart fearing to want, with which these were so troubled, as it made them leave God's people for saving of their goods, and to go among heathen idolaters; for whither will not distrust of God and love of riches lead men? They err, therefore, which, being in a poor estate, think contentment to be found in riches and fulness of these earthly things, when Solomon telleth us the contrary, Eccles. v. 10, and daily experience from the rich and wealthy of the world doth apparently shew it.

*And the Lord hath brought me home again empty.* It is not said that the Lord sent her out full, but she went out of herself, and he brought her home again, but yet empty; she lost what she hoped to keep. This good woman in this speech giveth us to know that she took notice of a fault in voluntarily leaving God's people to save her goods, for which the Lord corrected her, yet in mercy brought her home again, though with loss. Note hence these things:

I. That it is a fault, voluntarily, for safety of goods, through distrust, to leave God's people, and go to live among idolaters; for such love their bodies better than their souls; they expose themselves to great dangers, and deprive themselves of the public and ordinary means of life and salvation. If such have warrant, as the woman had by Elisha, 2 Kings viii. 1, 2, they may have hope; but if they voluntarily, distrusting God, take such a course, they may rather look for a curse than expect a blessing.

II. That there is no certainty in wordly wealth, for here is mention of fulness and emptiness in Naomi; and this may we see in the former examples of Job, of Haman, so in Solomon and his son Rehoboam, in Babylon and Tyre, Isa. xxiii. 9, Ezek. xxvii. 2, 27; for the preservation of outward estates is not in the hands of the possessors, nor within their power, but in God, who is the giver. And again, man in his abundance doth forget God, and so causeth the Lord to take it from them, as he did the kingdom from Saul, the ten tribes from Solomon's house, the government from Jeroboam, and the empire from Belshazzar. We are not then to set our hearts on our outward prosperity, Ps. lxii. 10, neither to glory in our riches, Jer. ix. 23, for outward glory is but as a fading flower, and as the warm sunshine in a cold winter day, soon gone, and all the delight thereof.

III. That oftentimes the way and means which men take to prevent want, by the same they bring it upon them, as it fell out here with Naomi, whose husband left God's people to go into Moab, to save their estate, and there lost all, so as Naomi returneth home in very great want, who went out full. The like befell Lot in leaving Abraham for this-worldly goods, and going to dwell in Sodom, where he left and lost all, and was glad to escape with his life; for if the means we use be not good, it is [so] far from helping or preserving us, as by God's cursing thereof it turneth to our ruin, for Jeroboam, by his policy, lost his kingdom. Therefore in seeking to uphold or to get an estate, look to the means, whether good or evil, lest we come short of that we do look for. It is ill to leave the means of the soul's safety for these worldly commodities, after which we must not make haste, lest we come to want, Prov. xxi. 5, and xxviii. 22; neither may we use unlawful courses to get them, for the treasures of wickedness profit not, but shall come to an ill end, Prov. xxi. 6, 7, and x. 2; as they are gotten, so in time commonly are they spent.

IV. That such of God's children as go astray he will bring home again, but yet with correction, as he here doth Naomi, and as he did the prodigal son; which he doth in mercy, to make them to know their error, and to walk afterwards more warily. It is comfort that God will in mercy seek up his children, and not lose one of them, Luke xv. 4, John xvii., but yet fear to go astray; for surely he will scourge them for their outroads when he bringeth them home, though it be a David, a Jehoshaphat, or a Josiah.

*Why then call ye me Naomi?* Hence learn that the humbled and afflicted take no pleasure to be remembered of their former prosperity by names and titles, for it but increaseth sorrow, and affordeth no comfort. What comfort might it be to tell Haman of his former honour, when he was going to hanging? What joy to Herod to hear of his glory and the applauding of him before, when now the judgment was upon him, and he eaten with worms for his vain glory and pride? The afflicted are not hereby comforted, for Naomi taketh no pleasure in that name whilst she is by her estate Mara. It is in vain to mention to the heavy-hearted what they have been, except upon certain hope of recovery to the same again; but their sorrow must be eased by better means of comfort, by shewing them the cause, the end, and benefit of God's fatherly chastisements, and so forth.

*Seeing the Lord hath testified against me.* Note hence,

I. That man's comfort is nothing able to allay the bitterness of God's discomforts upon us. Their calling her Naomi could do her no good, while she knew herself called by the Lord Mara, and whilst he did witness against her. What can it profit a woman of place, whilst she is in the bitterness of her soul, and afflicted by some grievous cross, to be called *Lady*, *Madam*, and to be spoken unto with terms of honour, whilst under God's hand! This should make the greatest therefore take more delight in seeking to please God, and to enjoy his favour and countenance, than to be dignified with the most highest titles; for these will afford no comfort when God will not afford it.

II. That afflictions are commonly the Lord's witnesses against us, for something amiss in us; for the first cause of them is sin, and the Lord threateneth them for sin, which the godly in affliction apply unto

themselves. In affliction let us search out our ways and repent of our sins, as did David, Rehoboam, and as the parable of the prodigal son teacheth, and the exhortations to repentance upon the Lord's afflicting of his people. We may not be like those in Ezek'el's days, who murmured against the Lord's hand upon them, as not being the guilty parties, but that others had sinned, and they unjustly punished, Ezek. xviii. 2.

*And the Almighty hath afflicted me.* This sheweth how God did witness against her, even by afflicting her. He witnesseth against us by his word written, by his messengers expounding and applying the word, by our own consciences accusing, and by his corrections and rod punishing. By all which ways God speaketh actually unto us for our amendment, and the godly hear him speak unto them; they together with the correction applying the word unto themselves, for their instruction, do make the affliction profitable unto them. The conclusion which hence I will note is this: that the godly do ascribe all their afflictions to the Lord, as Naomi doth here, and as Job did, chap. i. and vi. 4, and xxx. 11, because they know that nothing is by chance, but by his providence, Amos iii. 6, 2 Chron. xv. 6, Isaiah xlv. 7. Things fall not out by mere natural causes, Job v. 6, but as the Lord will; and therefore should we learn patience, seeing that afflictions come from God. This did work patience in Joseph, Gen. xlv. 7, in Job, chap. i., and in David, 2 Sam. xvi. 11; and so it will in all such as fear the Lord, and submit themselves to his good will and pleasure, as our Saviour did in the garden, saying to his Father, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt,' Mat. xxvi. 39.

Ver. 22. *So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley-harvest.*

The conclusion of this chapter, and an introduction into that which followeth. This is a brief sum of their journey, shewing who, from whence, whither, and at what time of the year it was.

*So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem.* Of Naomi and Ruth, and their loving journeying together, before hath been spoken. Yet note how the Holy Ghost, in naming Ruth, omitteth not to shew again her country, and that she was a Moabitess, and not an Israelitess by birth, and but daughter-in-law to Naomi; yet she came with her to Bethlehem, and that in safety. Whence note,

I. That grace can unite where all outward means are rather hindrances than furtherances thereto, as country, education, and age. Ruth was of Moab; she was otherwise brought up than Israelites were, as a Moabitess woman; she was young and Naomi old, and but daughter-in-law to Naomi, yet she held on to the end. Labour we for grace, which can make us good and acceptable to God, what[ever] otherwise shall be wanting unto us in worldly respects.

II. That they travel safely whom God conducteth; for Naomi saith before that the Lord brought her home; and here is shewed their country. So Jacob passed well on to Mesopotamia, Gen. xxviii. 15, and returned with safety, because God was with him. So did Israel journey to Canaan, in which they were safely seated, because the Lord was with them. For he loveth those whom he taketh care of; he never slumbereth nor sleepeth, and he is almighty, ever present also to help them. Let us then get him for our guide. And this we shall do if we undertake a lawful journey, if we pray with Moses that the Lord's presence would go with us, and believe, as he hath promised, that he will neither fail us, nor forsake us.

III. That such as be attent to their journey, and desire to come to the end, make no outroads. These came from Moab to Bethlehem, they had no idle vagaries that we read of. Old Naomi desired to see her country, and young Ruth was not wantonly disposed, but constantly kept her company. These two may be types of the believers, Jew and Gentile travelling to heaven, and may teach us to attend our journey, and beware of by-paths and idle outgoings, but to keep on straight, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, but to remove our feet from evil.

*In the beginning of barley-harvest.* This circumstance of the time and season doth argue the truth of the story, for shewing the certainty of that which Naomi had heard before, ver. 6, and also to be an introduction to that which followeth in the next chapter. This harvest was in part of March and part of April; for so much sooner is harvest there than here. This harvest time is that which is the time promised to all the earth, Gen. viii., but yet not at one time to all. Now, note here this with ver. 6, and we may see that harvest is called God's visiting his people with bread. Whence we learn, that harvest is God's blessing, in his mercy giving bread to sustain man's life. This is his common blessing, Gen. viii. 22, and promised to the obedient with plenty, Lev. xxvi. 5, 10, for times and seasons are in the Lord's hand; and this time is the appointed time to reap and gather in the corn for food, by which man liveth. Therefore, first, let us acknowledge God to be the Lord of the harvest, as he calleth himself, Mat. ix. 38, and confess this blessing to be from him, Ps. cxlvii. 14. Secondly, to pray to him for it, seeing it is from him, Ps. cxliv. 13. Thirdly, to be thankful when we enjoy this blessing, and to pay the due allotted for the Lord's service in testimony of thanks, Exod. xxiii. 16, and xxxiv. 22. In old time, none appeared before the Lord empty, Deut. xvi. 16, 17. Fourthly, to labour diligently at this time, Prov. x. 5, and vi. 8, seeing it is the appointed time to gather in God's blessings; and be not slothful, the ant will teach thee diligence. Fifthly, to take it as a punishment from God, when this har-

vest is taken from us, which is done divers ways, as by cursing the fruit that it prosper not, or by sending unseasonable weather to destroy the fruits, Deut. xxviii., Joel i. 11, 12, 2 Sam. xii. 17, Prov. xxvi. 1. Lastly, note hence that it was in the very beginning of barley harvest, which was before their wheat harvest, for they had both wheat-harvest, as Gen. xxx. 14, and xv. 1, and here barley-harvest, and this also first, as 2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10. So that Naomi neglected no time, but took the very beginning, as soon as ever she heard of the Lord's gracious visitation and mercy towards her people. Thus can we provide for the body; let us care also for the soul, that it want not the food which endureth to eternal life. And thus much for this first chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

THIS chapter setteth out how Ruth was entertained after she came among God's people, how she behaved herself, and what favour she found at the hands of the chiefest man of the place, where she abode with her mother-in-law.

Ver. 1. *And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz.*

Here is the party set out, whom God in his secret counsel had provided for Ruth, who is described by his affinity with Naomi, and how that was, then by his wealth, next by his family, and lastly by his name. The drift is, to declare what moved so great a man to shew such kindness to Ruth, a stranger and a poor woman.

*And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's.* Naomi was not basely married, but to one of an honourable stock, though now grown poor; yet this her affinity brought Boaz to have a good respect unto Ruth, even for kindred's sake, and therefore are these words set down, as is before noted. Here observe,

I. That rich and poor may be nigh of kin. Naomi had a great wealthy man to her kinsman by her husband, and that very nigh too, chap. iii. 1; for diversity of outward estates doth not alter blood and kindred, though it make a change in their persons. Let not therefore the rich disdain their poor kindred, for poverty is no disgrace where there is not want of honesty. Christ was poor, and very poor, living off the alms of others. God chooseth his people of such, James ii. None but have poor kindred, and the best have in some of their forefathers been mean enough.

II. That even kindred either is or should be of force to move kinsfolk to respect one another. This is gathered hence, for that the scope of these words is to shew how Boaz came to respect Ruth, which was for kindred's sake, yet chiefly for her virtues, as after shall be shewed; and for love of kindred, see it in Rahab, Josh. ii. 13, and in the Shechemites, Judges ix. 3, though in other respects, in their choosing of Abimelech, they were not to be commended. See this also in Samson's friends, Judges xvi., in Cornelius to his friends, Acts x. 24. For kindred are bone of bone, as the Israelites spake of David, 2 Sam. v. 1, and are as the branches from one root, and as members of one body, and therefore must love one another; which reproveth this age, which careth not for their kindred, except they be rich, which is the sin of unnaturalness, 2 Tim. iii.

*A mighty man of wealth.* Yet also a godly man, as appeareth by his godly behaviour, his speeches, his works of mercy, his praising virtue in others, and his obedience unto God's law in taking Ruth to wife. We see then that a wealthy man may be a godly man some time. Such a wealthy man was Abraham, so Isaac, Jacob, Job, and Joseph of Arimathea; for goods and graces are not in themselves opposite, being both the gifts of God. The one may help the other, grace to guide and dispose well of goods, and goods well used, to declare and set forth the graces of the heart in alms-deeds, in maintenance of God's word, and in doing other Christian duties. Grace humbleth where riches would puff up, yet riches well used bring grace in estimation before men, for they enable men to shew forth godliness, and to pass on their time with the more comfort, Eccles. v. 20, and to countenance and defend their poor Christian brethren in well-doing. Therefore, if grace and goods go together, thou hast great cause to bless God, for it is a most happy estate to be rich towards the world and to God too, to be rich body and soul. But although this is a very rare estate, yet we see that they may meet together, and therefore we may not think that he which is rich cannot be religious. True it is that it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, Luke xviii. 24, 25, but it is not impossible. If any ask me why so few are rich which be godly? I answer, Because the Lord chooseth most of such as be poor for his people; these make conscience of getting goods, and will not follow the way of evil men and worldlings to enrich themselves, neither will the Lord make many of them rich, lest they should wax in their wealth proud and forgetful of God, as men in their abundance do. Why, will some say, are most rich men hardly religious? Because God chooseth few of them, 1 Cor. i. 26; they be taken up with the cares of this life, which choketh the seed of the word in them, Mat. xiii.; they set their hearts upon their riches, as they see them increase, and are wholly taken up therewith, so as they cannot set their minds on better things;

lastly, they make riches their god, so as they cannot serve God, because they serve mammon, Mark x. 17.

*And of the family of Elimelech.* So as Boaz and he were both of one house and stock, and very nobly born both of them, chap. iv. 20, 21, yet Elimelech poor, and his wife in a very mean estate. So as we hence may see, that parents may provide for their posterity; but which of their children shall be rich, which poor, is of God's disposing, and not of man's forecast, as we may see in these two, whose ancestor Nahshon was the prince of Judah, the royal tribe, and ruled over 74,000 men of war, Num. i. 7, 16, and ii. 3, 4, or was fit for it. Thus parents may have a goodly portion, when some of theirs may have nothing left them, Eccles. v. 14, for riches are God's gift; he can bestow them, and he can take them away again, which Job acknowledged. If parents cannot make their children rich, then let them not with too much care vex themselves for them; let them not think that by their scraping together they can make them wealthy after them; that is God's blessing, that is his mercy, for if he bless it not, oh how soon is that consumed by children which parents got with great labour and care, and perhaps with an ill conscience too, which procured the curse, besides much infamy and hatred of men in their lifetime! Is it not madness in parents to damn themselves in hope to make their children great, seeing they cannot effect what they strive for, except God be so pleased to have it? And then here let children look up to God, and learn to fear him, and rest not in their parents' gettings, but rather let them set themselves to honest callings, and learn how to be able honestly and frugally to manage that which shall be given to them, that when they shall have such goods and lands in their hands which their parents shall leave them, they may the better be able to employ them, and so preserve wisely that which is befallen unto them; for let parents get what they can, if they leave their children without callings, idly brought up, to go bravely and to follow the loose ways of most rich men's children in these days, as not knowing anything but how to play the gentleman, as they call it, a consumption will soon seize upon all, and turn them out of all, and they become beggars, as daily experience sheweth.

*And his name was Boaz.* This is added for more certain knowledge of the party her kinsman; circumstances make histories more creditable, and therefore are they expressed. This name signifieth *strength* or *fortitude.* Whose son he was, and of what house he came, is noted afterwards in the end of the fourth chapter.

Ver. 2. *And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.*

This verse is a request made, and sheweth, first, of whom it is made, then to whom and for what, with the grant thereunto, as is apparent by the words. The scope is to shew how great things come to pass by poor and unlikely beginnings, as we may see in this of Ruth, of Joseph coming to be a prince in Egypt. The like may be seen in Moses, yea, in the glorious advancement of Christ's gospel. By all which God's power and wisdom is shewed, man's wisdom cast down, and ourselves encouraged to have faith and confidence in God.

*And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi.* When Ruth was come into Judah, she and Naomi dwelt together, but yet in poor estate, and now time serving to help themselves by labour, Ruth bethinketh herself what to do in this case. She murmureth not against the God of Israel, as his own people the Israelites did in the wilderness, and were ready to return into Egypt; she minded not Moab; she was not offended with Naomi her poverty, nor with the rest for not affording her plenty; but she resolveth to use her own labour for her help while the time did serve. From which we may learn, that honest hearts truly entertaining religion do not forsake it, or the godly, for worldly wants. Ruth could not for these things be made to start back, nor Saint Paul for all his afflictions, for sincere hearts love religion for itself, and the godly for their virtues, not for their outward estate; they also do know a reward of eternal happiness to be in the life to come, which they set before them, and therefore do not take offence from the outward things of this life, which they least esteem of, and look to have the least share in them; which reproveth those that for the wants of the world bid farewell to the word, like Demases. But the apostles for Christ forsook all, and Moses chose the poor estate of the godly, to live religiously, before the court of Pharaoh, to live viciously, Let this check also those which upon every want murmur against God, and are ready with the rebellious company in the wilderness to return into Egyptian bondage of sin and Satan, for to enjoy some outward and worldly contentment.

*Let me now go to the field.* Though it was honest, good, and necessary which Ruth intended, yet would she not go abroad without her mother-in-law's leave and good liking; for godly children hold themselves bound to be at the disposing of their parents, yea, in all lawful and necessary things, though their parents also be poor, because such children make conscience of the commandment of honouring their parents. Let children follow this example. Ruth was but a daughter-in law, yet see her grace and humility, which the Lord rewarded unto her; which justly condemneth the sauciness of children-in-law in these days, who think no duty to be due to father or mother-in-law, especially if they be poor, as was Naomi here. But what speak I of children-in-law? I wish that a just complaint might not be taken up against such as by nature owe themselves unto their parents. Are there not Dinah-

like daughters, which will follow their delights till they return home with shame? Do not many marry as their lust doth lead, without any respect to their parents, like the wanton sons before the flood? Gen. vi. I wish the seed of Esaus were not among us, which vex their parents. Children will seek to be nourished of their parents when they are young, or when they be in need. But if parents have need of them, ah how unnatural be they! Will they, like a Ruth, willingly labour for them? or, will they not rather despise them, and get from them, and labour for others? A strange master's commandment shall be obeyed, when a word from poor parents will make stubborn children the more disobedient. But let children know and remember the law against a stubborn son, Deut. xxi. 18, and the curse which is threatened against such as despise their parents, Deut. xxvii. 16, Prov. xxx. 17, that they may fear and tremble, and do no more so wickedly.

*And glean ears of corn after him.* Ruth asketh not leave to run abroad to see others, or to be seen, to see the country, to get acquaintance, to go to wakes, revels, May-games, morris-dancings, and such heathenish vanities, practised too commonly here, but not known among the ancient people of God. No, no; Ruth desireth to go to labour for her living, and to help also her poor old mother-in-law, yea, she was not ashamed to go to glean. Though she had been the wife of one so well descended, she scorneth not honest labour; for honest minds will stoop to base means (in proud persons' conceits) so they be honest, to relieve their wants in their poor estate. Moses will not stand upon his education, the gifts of his mind, and singular learning in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, but will be content to keep Jethro's sheep in his need; so will Paul work with his hands, and make tents to maintain himself, though he was brought up as a scholar under learned Gamaliel. The humility of these is to be followed as praiseworthy for their virtue and piety herein. It is no shame to labour when men are brought low, whatsoever they be by birth, as they call it, and by their first education. The godly never stood upon these terms, as many now do, who brag of their gentry, and yet are not ashamed to go a-begging or hang upon their richer kindred till they be weary of them, or will run into dishonest courses, and all this forsooth because they hold labour a disgrace. Work they cannot, they will not; but it is no shame for them to live dishonestly and idly, contrary to nature, contrary to God's injunction that men should labour, contrary to the practice of all the godly, and the example of Christ himself, who wrought in a handicraft, as may be gathered by the words out of the Evangelist, Mark vi., and in that it was said, 'He went home and was obedient unto his parents.' Note further how the truly religious will not live idly. This we may see in Ruth here, and in Jacob and others, for they make conscience of the loss of time. Let him or they whosoever, which think themselves religious indeed, make conscience to take pains in some calling, and beware of living idly. What if they can say they have outward means enough for themselves to live upon? Yet they are not to live idly, because idleness is a great sin, the nurse of all vice, as we see in those that live idly; they are made the devil's instruments to all villany. Neither is it enough that a man can maintain himself and be chargeable to none, but he must live to do good to others, as the apostle teacheth, Eph. iv. 28.

Lastly, observe that gleaning, as now, so then, was a lawful means for the poor to get corn for food, as we may read in the books of Moses, Lev. xix. 9 and xxiii. 22, Deut. xxiv. 19. And thus the Lord shewed his care for the poor, and also taught the rich, in the midst of God's mercy and bounty toward them, to be mindful of the needy brethren, and not to forget them. The rich, therefore, must give the poor leave to glean, Lev. xix. 9; they may not drive them out of the field, neither may they glean up their lands themselves and so rob the poor of their due, which is the scatterings of God's mercy towards them. And here let the poor honestly take this liberty to glean, but first let them ask leave of the owner, as Ruth did, ver. 7, then also to acknowledge it a favour, as she did; thirdly, to gather the scattered ears, Deut. xxiii. 24, 25, and not to cut off the ears of standing corn, nor to steal whole sheaves, or out of shocks, as many thievish people do, to the hurt of their own souls, and the hardening of men's hearts against themselves and other poor people more honest than they.

*In whose sight I shall find favour.* So she went but as unacquainted. She had liberty to glean by law, yet she speaketh as one that would glean with leave, and as she that had hope to find favour somewhere, though she knew not of whom to expect it in particular. Thus she goeth, as we say, at random, or at adventure; but God, as he had decreed, so he directed her by the hand of his providence whither she should go.

One thing note here, that the godly, in using lawful means to live, hope to find favour with one or other for their relief. This Ruth's words here do shew as much; for they trust in God, who hath the hearts of men in his hand, to incline them as he pleaseth, as he did Boaz towards Ruth, and who also hath promised his help to those which, using lawful means, do depend upon him, Ps. xxxvii. 3. And therefore, in doing our part, and using the means, let us in our wants hope well; let us not doubt but that he will bless our labours.

*And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.* See here how meekly and lovingly this good old Naomi answereth. No doubt but it rejoiced her heart to see her so willing to take pains, whom she, perhaps, would have been loath to have pressed to such a mean business. We may note that requests are to be granted of parents

unto children, when they be lawful and fit, as Job did to his children to feast together, David to Amnon his request to have Tamar sent to dress meat for him, 2 Sam. xiii., though yet villany was in Amnon's heart; but the request was reasonable, and therefore yielded unto of David; so was Absalom's desiring to go to Hebron (as he pretended) to pay his vow, which he had made unto God. Caleb also granted his daughter her request, Joshua xv. 19, and Naomi Ruth's here, which is to be followed of loving parents; but yet withal with deliberate consideration of the reasons upon which the request is made, lest a David be deluded, and wickedness be committed by an outrageous Amnon. Another thing may be observed, which is this, that a meek and loving spirit giveth a meek and a loving answer. Naomi saith not, *Go*, as a sturdy speech, but, *Go, my daughter*, for she was not of a sturdy, proud, and impatient spirit, of which a rough and churlish speech is a sign. And therefore let us learn to answer meekly and lovingly, that we may not be justly censured for churlish natures, proud and impatient. Good speech is very graceful to others, and procureth love to ourselves, as the contrary doth provoke unto wrath, as we see Nabal's answer did unto David.

Ver. 3. *And she went, and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.*

As Ruth craved leave and obtained it, so she now goeth abroad, and by God's good providence lighteth on the field of Boaz. So as here is shewed what she did abroad, 'she gleaned;' then how, 'after the reapers;' where it was,' 'in Boaz's field,' who is here again said to be Elimelech's kinsman, that so the providence of God might herein more clearly appear.

*And she went, and came and gleaned in the field.* She craved leave to go, and when it was granted her she accordingly went. Honest motions and intendments to well-doing are to be put into practice, else they be nothing worth. Paul had a mind to visit the brethren, and so he did, Acts xiv.; the prodigal son had a purpose to return home, and he returned; Moses thought of going out to visit his brethren, and so he did, Exod. ii. If motions be good, it is good to put them in execution, and that speedily, if cause so require, as Ruth doth here, and not to mind, purpose, and will to do well, and yet never to do as they so purpose, losing the fruit of good thoughts. Again, note from this her bold adventure, and going forth in such perillous times, that whom necessity moveth, and confidence in God encourageth, they do fear no danger. Ruth went abroad among strangers; she was a stranger and a young woman, yet trusting in God; and being urged of necessity to use honest means to live, she feared no peril, though in those days every one did what they listed, because there was then no king in Israel, Judges xviii. Of such an undaunted spirit was Ehud, in setting upon Eglon; Gideon, in destroying Baal's altar; Elijah, in seeing the face of Ahab; and Micaiah, in telling the truth before two kings, contrary to the word of four hundred false prophets; for when men have faith in God, when the duty of their calling warranteth them, they grow courageous and bold, and do put on a resolution without fear. Therefore, in our affairs to remove fear, let us have an honest calling to that which we go about, and have confidence in God, who is able and will stand by to help us.

*After the reapers.* She followed such as cut up the standing corn. She thrust not herself in before, or among them, as an impudent, bold housewife; but followed after them, to gather up the scattered ears which they did leave; and neither this did she neither without leave, see verse 7; all making to the commendation of the honesty, modesty, humility, and good behaviour of this virtuous young woman, that her example might be for others to imitate.

*And her hap was.* That is, though she went at unawares, making choice of no place, but where she should find favour, yet she light well, by God's good providence, which is here to be understood in her good hap; which word is spoken according to men, when things fall out besides a man's purpose, or otherwise than was intended, and whereof a man is ignorant, before the thing come to pass, then it is counted hap, or luck, Deut. xix. 4; or, as the heathen used to speak, fortune. It is not unlawful to speak according to men thus, It happened, it chanced, it was my luck, Luke x. 31; so it be we understand thereby that which happeneth beyond our purpose and expectation, but yet guided by God's hand and providence, Mat. x. 29, 30; and also that we know and hold no mere chance and fortune, as the heathen have imagined, Acts xxvii. 34, without the hand of God acknowledged therein, as the idolatrous priests and diviners of the Philistines once spoke, 1 Sam. vi. 9, if we understanding ourselves in this wise, there is no scruple to be made of speaking as aforesaid, always excepting in clear case, where the apparent hand of God is seen, for thus offended the Philistines.

*To light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz.* God doth so govern men's actions, as things fall out beyond expectation as they were to be wished. See it in the success of Abraham's servant, Gen xxiv., sent to fetch a wife for Isaac; in Elijah his coming to the poor widow of Sarepta in a most fit hour; and in Saul's coming into the cave where David and his men were, by which David took occasion to clear his innocency to Saul, which otherwise could never have been so well demonstrated. And this God doth, as foreknowing and determining everything, and ruling the same by the hand of his providence, as himself hath determined to bring things to pass. This should make us to rely upon God's providence, as Abraham

did in that thing, which was to his servant uncertain, Gen. xxiv. 7, and also to acknowlege his providence in everything, in a work of mercy to be thankful, and in any other trial to learn patience. Note again hence, that God will prosperously direct the well-minded, which will use honest means to relieve themselves. So hath he promised, Ps. xxxvii. 3; for their way is well-pleasing to God in such a course and case. Let us therefore depend on God, and use honest means to sustain our wants; so shall we assuredly have experience of God's goodness towards us.

*Who was of the kindred of Elimelech.* These words are again mentioned, to shew that it was the same Boaz mentioned before, and also to shew why Ruth had so quickly obtained leave to glean there, and why Boaz did so much respect her afterwards, and that of a sudden, upon so small acquaintance, and to give us to know what a way hereby was made to further the Lord's intendment in matching Boaz with this Ruth, Elimelech's daughter-in-law, and the wife once of Mahlon, one of his sons, which being dead, the next kinsman was to raise up the name of the dead, and to take the widow for his wife; so that Elimelech might not want one for his inheritance amongst God's people.

Ver. 4. *And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.*

God bringeth Ruth by his hand unto Boaz's field, and then he by the same hand draweth Boaz to come thither while she was there, that so the one might be known to the other; that by seeing and liking the match might be made which God in his mercy intended for his daughter, this young woman. Here in this verse is Boaz going into the field to his reapers, then his saluting of them, and their resaluting of him.

*And, behold.* This is used to set out a remarkable thing; and is here as if it had been said, Take notice of God's providence herein, as a thing worthy observation, that Boaz should now come into the field at this time unto his reapers; and in willing the reader to behold this we may learn, that the provident hand of God is in all things to be diligently marked and observed. For hereby we shall see God in everything, and so acknowledge his ruling hand in and over all. We shall see his favour and help in delivering his children and servants, as he did David from Saul, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27; in furthering them to their honour and welfare, as here Ruth; and so Mordecai, when the king must in reading light upon that place in his chronicles which concerned him, Esther vi. We shall, then, hereby see his wrath against the wicked, in bringing Jezebel to Jezreel, with Jehoram and Ahaziah, to cut off at once the house of Ahab, as he had threatened, 2 Kings viii. 29 and ix. 15, 16. Let us, then, observe wisely the hand of God's providence, that he may have the glory in all things, when we see his rule and power either in his works of mercy or works of judgment.

*Boaz came from Bethlehem* unto his reapers, who were reaping in his field, and so like a good husband would have an eye unto them; for good householders do oversee the affairs of their house and family, and such also as they set on work: 2 Kings iv. 18, the Shunamite would be with his reapers, as Boaz was here. This is Solomon's counsel, Prov. xxvii. 23. And the praise of a good housewife also is, to look well to the ways of her household, because riches are uncertain, Prov. xxvii. 24; they abide not for ever. And it is no less a virtue to keep what we have gotten, than to get what we had not.* Careful vigilancy over our family is a good means to preserve our estate. By this shall we see who is faithful and painful, to commend and reward them, and who is negligent and faithless, to reprove and correct them, or else to remove them. Let us therefore learn to play the good husbands, as men say; for it is no fault for a man to be thriving, or for the greatest to look well to their charge. If any fault be, it is in covetousness and niggardliness, and not in provident circumspection, and in a watchful eye over the family, to keep them in honest labour, and to prevent wastefulness. Negligent masters in this point are worthy reproof, they spoil their servants, they undo themselves. And here such must know themselves to be in error, who think it a disgrace for men of worth to see to their servants and to be among their workmen. Indeed, if servants were like unto Jacob, faithful and painful, Gen. xxxi. 38–40; or like Joseph, to be trusted with all that men have, Gen. xxxix. 23; or like the faithful workmen in Joash's and Josiah's days, 2 Kings xii. 15 and xxii. 7; the eye of the master might be spared. But many servants be rather like false Ziba, filching Onesimus before his conversion; riotous like those in Mat. xxiv. 49, or runaways like Shimei's servants,† so that masters had need to see to them; yet must masters beware of a greedy mind, as thinking that servants never do enough. They must take heed of distrustful minds, without just cause; charity thinketh no ill. Neither must they keep their servants to work so hardly, as that they cannot afford them any time to serve God; for such masters are more like Turks than Christians, and use their servants rather like beasts than like men endued with reason, and having souls to save. If masters take time also for the soul and for the service of God, and then be provident for the world, it is praiseworthy, and the fruit thereof will appear in God's blessing falling upon the work of their hands.

*And said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you.* Thus Boaz speaketh to them, when he cometh into the field; this was his manner of saluting them, and likewise of their resaluting him again; so that the

* Non minor est virtus, quàm quærere, parta tuere.

† 1 Kings ii. 39.—ED.

form of saluting is not one and the same, as we may see in Ps. cxxix. 8, Mat. xxvi. 49, Joshua xx. 26. Now, salutations are not only words of courteous and civil behaviour, but prayers made unto God one for another; and therefore we may hence learn,

I. That it is a commendable thing for one to salute another when they meet. This our God and Saviour did, John xx. 26; this angels have done, Judges vi. 12, Luke i. 28; and this we see good men have done. It is among men civility and courtesy, especially of the superior to the inferior, as here; it also procureth love, as we may see in Absalom's courteous saluting the people, by which he stole away their hearts after him; but this was the abuse of this commendable practice. We must beware of hypocrisy therein; we must not salute like Judas, Mat. xxvi. 49; not like Joab, with fair words, and foul hearts and hands, 2 Sam. xx. 10; neither must any neglect this, of pride and contempt of others, as too many now do. If this be commendable, then surely the Anabaptists do err, who hold it unlawful to salute such as they meet, objecting certain places of Scripture, as 2 Kings iv. 29, where the prophet commandeth his servant not to salute or resalute any that he met. But this place is to be understood only to express the haste he should make, as the commandment to gird up his loins doth shew. It doth not simply forbid to salute any at all other occasions or times. Another place is in Luke x. 4, where our Saviour Christ forbiddeth his apostles to salute any man by the way. Neither is here forbidden to salute any, for in verse 5 he teacheth them to salute others. But this speech was to shew that they should make speed in that whereabout they were sent, and to avoid the least hindrance that might stay them from performance of their duty; for by saluting one another sometimes occasions are taken of staying, which here he seemeth to have relation unto, and not that he would have them neglect common and commendable courtesies. The third place is 2 John 10, where he forbids to bid God-speed to some; which is to be understood of not allowing of such as were heretics and false teachers, as far forth as they were such, and therein not to wish them prosperity, which is nothing to ordinary salutations.

II. That masters are to pray that God may be with their household, family, and workmen. So doth Boaz here pray, and there is good reason for it; for if God be with them, they shall prosper; as did Jacob and Joseph in their services, and Abraham's servant in his business. It is he that giveth them strength to labour, and without his blessing nothing can go forward, Ps. cxxvii. 2; for he giveth power to get wealth, Deut. viii. 18. And therefore let masters remember this duty to God for their family and servants.

*And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.* Thus they religiously salute him again; so as they which do salute are to be resaluted. The Scripture teacheth humanity, and commendeth the same to us in godly men's practice; as here in saluting one another, so in comely gestures, in reverencing our betters, as Abigail did David, and Joseph Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 12. Indeed the Scripture, besides other things, is a school of good manners, and therefore checketh such as be uncivil in their carriage and behaviour, when civility and good manners are a grace to a Christian profession. Again note, that servants are to pray for a blessing upon their masters. It is a rare grace to play the part of an Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv.; but thus to do, argueth true love in a servant; and if a master be blessed, he is the better enabled to do for a good servant. But where are such servants now to be found?

Ver. 5. *Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?*

This is an inquiry after the young woman. Wherein is to be observed, who maketh the demand, of whom he inquireth, and concerning whom the demand was made.

*Then said Boaz.* He no sooner came into the field, and had saluted his reapers, but his eye was upon Ruth; of her he took special notice, and demanded who she was, and to whom she did belong. Which sheweth a guiding power of God herein, and also that afore this time he had not seen her. Old Naomi had not sent her, it may seem, to his house, nor abroad to be gazed upon, and yet was she famous for her virtues, chap. iii. 11, which will spread themselves abroad well enough, though the party in person be known to few.

*Unto his servant that was set over the reapers.* Boaz had placed one as overseer to the rest, and of this man doth he demand the question. Hence note, that it is a point of wisdom in great families to appoint an overseer over the rest in the master's absence. Thus Abraham had Eliezer his steward, so had Ahab his Obadiah, and here Boaz, the bailiff of his husbandry; for masters cannot always be with their servants, and therefore it is necessary to have such a one, to set every one to their task, to see what is done to be done with diligence, and also well and orderly, and to prevent falsehood and deceit as well as they can, and further to acquaint their master with his affairs, with the pains and labour of such as be diligent, and contrarily to give notice of such as be not for his service, that so the one sort may be rewarded as they deserve, and the other put off, after their wages be paid them, for the hire must not be kept back; which a good steward must have care of for his master's credit, and his own discharge. But yet here let masters, in setting one over the rest, make a good choice, and see that the man be, first, wise and skilful in that he undertaketh; secondly, one diligent and painful in his own person; thirdly, a man fearing God, as was Abraham's servant, and Ahab's steward; for such a one will be honest towards his master, careful to make others religious, and so procure a blessing to the whole house. Such an one may be trusted, as Potiphar

did Joseph; and to such an one authority may be committed to command others, and to order matters among servants; but yet ever so as that he be ready to give an account of his stewardship. Now also hence we may infer, that if one may be set over another in a family, then also in a commonwealth, for without order of superiority and inferiority no commonwealth can stand, 1 Chron. xxvii., which being true, overthroweth the anabaptistical anarchy. Moreover, in that the overseer is asked concerning this damsel by Boaz, and not the rest, we learn, that servants who are betrusted with the care and charge of business, are to give account touching any thing or person within their charge; to them the question is to be made, which will make such to look to their charge, to be ready to answer according to the trust committed into their hands.

*Whose damsel is this?* This sheweth that Ruth was yet but young, and therefore the more commendation to her, that came to be so famous for virtue; and in that Boaz asketh not *what*, but *whose* damsel she is, it giveth us to know that he thought her to belong to some, as one of the maids of Israel, and that she was not (as now vain young women desire to be) at their own hand, which is the next way to lewdness and all looseness. Such mistressless maids were not then as now too common, which maketh them also to become common. An evil not sufferable in a well governed state, to have masterless men or mistressless women. It is fit to ask young people till they be married, Whose they be? to whom they belong? and whom they do serve? Before I conclude this verse, another thing may be noted from Boaz; that it is a wise part of a householder to know who they be which come to his house or into his grounds or field to take commodity by him; as he doth here, finding her in his field with his reapers; lest a man give countenance to the unworthy, 2 Thes. iii., for men are to be merciful, but yet in wisdom, because some are not to be relieved; therefore let men well know to whom to give. In former times, amongst us, men have been commended for good housekeepers; but if their housekeeping were examined by God's word, we should find it nothing less than good housekeeping, but rather such houses of riot, excess, prodigality, gluttony, and drunkenness, suffering all sorts of idle, lewd, and licentious mates to come in to eat, drink, card, dice, riot, and revel under a lord of misrule, especially at Christmas, a time pretended to be spent in joy and rejoicing in the honour of Christ, but was indeed abused to his great dishonour, to the increase of sin, and the pleasing of Satan.

Ver. 6. *And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.*

The servant's answer unto his master, briefly and fully, in which he here and in the next verse praiseth Ruth also. He telleth here what she was, whence she came, and with whom, and so sheweth whose she was, and to whom she did belong.

*And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said.* By this servant's ready answer unto his master's demand, it appeareth that he had made inquiry of her what she was. Faithful servants which have charge committed to them, should be able to answer to their lord or master concerning any person or thing which fall within their charge, when the question is asked. This doth argue the care and diligent circumspection which is to be used of all such as be put in trust, and it will commend their faithfulness and honesty; and the contrary sheweth faithlessness and dishonesty.

*It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.* This servant very briefly telleth to the full what she was; and here it is not a bare declaration, but also a commendation of her, who being but a young woman, would come with an old poor woman from her own country, into a strange land, which indeed was a great praise to her, as I have afore noted; and if the servant spoke this, as some learned think, in the way of commendation, we may learn,

I. That as the master was a lover of virtue, so was the man; so like happy master, like happy man. For as this praised her to the master, as it better appeareth in the next verse, so the master greatly commendeth her, after he took notice of her, by which the love of goodness in them both appeareth. Which may set out their happiness; and on the contrary it is unhappiness to an Obadiah to dwell with wicked Ahab, or a Jacob with a Laban; so to an Hezekiah to have his Shebnah, or an honest Mephibosheth his wicked Ziba.

II. We may see that the godly and well-disposed will praise virtue in whomsoever they see it, whether in strangers or home-born, in poor or rich, noble or base persons, friend or foe, as David did in both Saul and Abner; because honest and virtuous minds love virtue truly in every one, they are not transported with an ill-disposed heart, either through pride or envy, to disdain or malign graces in other, but to speak the truth, and to praise them for whatsoever is good in them. This mark of true love let us shew forth; this will preserve goodness and virtue in others, procure respect to ourselves, and good favour to such of them as be poor, as we may see here from Boaz towards Ruth. This condemneth such, first, as cannot praise other for well-doing; which argueth pride, or envy, or malice, or all of them, and by which they shew too much self-love in themselves, and little love or none at all to their neighbour. Secondly, those which are so far from praising men, as they lessen their virtues, and blazon their infirmities, and so seek to disgrace them, contrary to true love and charity; and yet a common evil in these days in most. Thirdly,

those that will commend perhaps others, but not before better than themselves, not to the full, but with their *ifs* and *ands*, with words of exception, shewing plainly they be loath to give men their due, falsely supposing the praises of other should derogate from themselves, and from their own worth; so vainly jealous are we of our own reputation.

III. We may observe that, in praises, religion is to have the first place; for here is Ruth set out as one forsaking her heathenish acquaintance to keep company with a virtuous woman, and leaving her idolatrous country for to dwell in Judah amongst God's people; and thus is Job set forth, Job i., and Cornelius, Acts x. 2. For religion and virtue is that which is in man most excellent, making him more than a man, forasmuch as he becomes a spiritual man of a carnal. Therefore, here let our commendations begin, and not dispraise men for profession of religion, an argument of the want of religion, nor judge them worthy commendations which are altogether without religion. True it is that many may have such gifts of nature and art as may much set them out with men, but if they want religion and virtue, their praise is more heathenish than Christian; and therefore they have no cause to rejoice in abilities of nature or art, seeing Satan, the enemy of all mankind, may therein be preferred before them. And in nothing can man be said to be more excellent or happy than a very devil, except in the right use of true religion; in nothing else can he go beyond him, nay, in no other thing can he equal him. Let, therefore, true religion and undefiled before God the Father, which is, to visit the fatherless and widows in their adversity, and to keep ourselves unspotted of the world, be our chiefest praise.

Ver. 7. *And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers amongst the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.*

The bailiff proceedeth still on in the commendations of Ruth, from her humility and modesty in not presuming without leave, and then from her diligence and constancy in her labour and painstaking.

*And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers amongst the sheaves;* that is, the ears of corn which lie scattered by the sheaves which yet lay abroad, and not that she did desire to be meddling with the sheaves. This she desired, and Boaz alloweth, ver. 15, which seemeth, therefore, to be a special favour to her. It was lawful for strangers, fatherless, and widows, to glean, by God's allowance and commandment unto his people, Deut. xxiv. 19; yet she entereth not boldly upon that liberty, but asketh leave humbly and modestly. Whence we may learn, that although God do bid the rich to relieve the poor, and to give leave in this case for them to gather scattered ears, yet is the same to be obtained by leave and the good will of the owners, as Ruth here hath leave. For though the rich be commanded to give by God's precept, yet before men they have right to all they have, and it is at their liberty to dispose thereof in that respect; and they may make choice of their poor as they see them to need, and to be worthy of relief; and therefore, albeit a man be poor, he may not (because God commands the rich to relieve him) be his own carver, he may not take from the rich anything but as it shall be bestowed upon him. Let the poor learn humility and modesty, and not be insolently bold and unthankful, or false and deceitful, as many be, who make no conscience to filch and steal, and think their poverty a reason sufficient to excuse them, especially if it be but in trifling things, as they account them, as is the picking now and then ears out of sheaves, or shocks of corn, or breaking hedges for firewood, or robbing of orchards, or the like. But let them know that poverty excuseth not their sin; it is theft in them, and the thief is cursed, Zech. v.; and thieves shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi.

*So she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now.* After leave, she set herself to work, but before, as it may be seen, she went home again, and stayed a little; so as her first coming was but to know where to get leave, and then forthwith after to fall to her labour; yet she made not her mother acquainted with anything till night, as apparently by ver. 19. The chief point commended here to us is, that painfulness in our labour, with constancy, is praiseworthy; so is it here in Ruth, as it was in Jacob, and blessed in them both; for this is commanded, Eccles. ix. 10, and the contrary forbidden, Rom. xii. Let us, then, be diligent in our labour, and be constantly painful. So shall God be obeyed, Eccles. ix. 10, Prov. xxvii. 23, who hath promised to bless such, Prov. xxviii. 19, and xx. 13. So it is gainful, to the body healthful; it doth procure favour, Prov. xi. 27, and honour, Prov. xii. 24, and maketh rich, Prov. x. 4, with God's blessing, Prov. x. 22. Beware, then, of sloth, which is forbidden, Rom. xii.; it bringeth men to follow vain company, Prov. xxviii. 19, gaming, Prov. xxi. 17, as experience sheweth, and so hasteneth poverty, Prov. x. 4, as being the punishment thereof; for God threateneth such with scarcity, Prov. xix. 15, and xii. 24, and vi. 6; and we see that such become wasteful, Prov. xviii. 9, and their house decayeth, Eccles. x. 18. There be which labour, but not cheerfully, not constantly; and therefore these may here learn to amend by the example of this Ruth, and the good housewife in the Proverbs, chap. xxxi. 13, which putteth her hands willingly to work; for it is a hateful thing to be slothful in our business, and forbidden, as before is shewed, Prov. x. 26, xxviii. 9. In this, the servant or day-tale-man may rob their master; they are brethren to great wasters, saith Solomon, and are a consumption to the estate of such as keep them. Yet

such make no conscience of this deceitful working, though perhaps they have a good measure of knowledge, and would be held more conscionable than some others be. But here it will be asked, perhaps, Who may be called slothful? Solomon will tell them that such be slothful, first, which refuse to work, Prov. xxi. 25, 26; secondly, which make idle excuses to keep them from daily labour, Prov. xxii. 13, and xxvi. 13; thirdly, which be subject to much sleep, for sloth causeth sleep, Prov. xix. 15; fourthly, which love their beds too well, Prov. xxvi. 14, and xxiv. 33; fifthly, which suffer their ground to lie unhusbanded, and their house to decay, Prov. xxiv. 30, 31, Eccles. x. 18; sixthly, which for a little cold will neglect their profit and doing of their duty, Prov. xix. 4; seventhly and lastly, which go lazily, as if they went upon thorns, and loath to hurt themselves, Prov. xv. 19. These be Solomon's marks of the slothful.

*Save that she tarried a little while in the house.* Thus this servant is careful to speak the truth in his relation to a small circumstance of time, that he might not be disproved. Honest minds and lovers of the truth are careful to speak truly every way, in every circumstance, that they may not be taxed in the least degree of untruth. For he hath an high esteem of the truth, whereupon he weigheth his words, and is careful in speaking only the truth. Oh that this care were in every one now-a-days, as it should be! We are commanded to speak truth, Eph. iv. 25, and not to lie one to another; and God, whom we worship, is the God of truth, Rom. iii. 4; Christ is truth, Mat. xxii. 16; and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, leading into all truth, John xiv. 17; the gospel, by which we believe, is the word of truth; and, lastly, it is a mark of one that shall dwell in God's tabernacle, and rest on his holy hill, to speak the truth, and that from his heart too. If we have such motives to press us to this duty, then, first, justly are they reprovable which do make no conscience of speaking truth, but are notorious liars; such be of the devil, John viii. 44; they live in one of those sins which made the Lord to have a controversy with the inhabitants of the land in the days of Hosea, Hosea iv. 2, and the liar shall be cast into everlasting destruction, Rev. xxi. 8. There are such as seem to make conscience of common lying, but yet will slip in the tongue now and then, as, first, to flatter others; so did the four hundred false prophets lie to Ahab, so did Doeg to Saul. Secondly, they that utter an untruth to do another a pleasure, which is called an officious lie, as the midwives in Egypt did, and Michal when she preserved David; but we may not do evil that good may come thereof, we may not lie for God himself, Job xiii. 7, 10. Thirdly, they that by lying make others merry. In all the Scripture I find not an example hereof. It may be, though many then were wicked, yet it seemeth not one was so lewd as to abuse his tongue with lying to make others sport; it is wickedness to make a sport of sin. Fourthly, they that lie for gain now and then, like Gehazi, or as Ananias and Sapphira, whom the Lord fearfully punished; and yet it is too common for men now to lie for gain, it is almost a mark of a tradesman. Fifthly, such as lie of ill-will, maliciously, and of envy, as Haman against the Jews, scribes and pharisees against Christ, and Potiphar's wife against Joseph. Hence arise slander and backbiting, which Christians must carefully avoid; and not only the hateful kinds of lying, but the other also, and every untrue speaking in any degree; and to do this, speak ever with understanding, deliberately, without hasty passion, without by-respects; also avoid levity, and beware of too many words.

Ver. 8. *Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.*

Boaz having heard of his servant who she was, and then also taking notice of her from that which he also before had heard of her, as it appeareth in ver. 11, he now turneth his speech unto her. Where note, who, to whom, how he speaketh, and what, even words of love and kindness, forbidding her to go any whither else, but to abide by his maidens.

*Then said Boaz unto Ruth.* This noble rich man sheweth great kindness unto the poor woman and stranger; when he knew what she was, he vouchsafed to speak to her and to comfort her in her poor estate. The rich and the mighty are to shew themselves respective to the poor which be godly, though strangers, when they be rightly informed of them, as Boaz sheweth himself to Ruth here. It is a sign that they are godly which love godliness in others, especially the poor, themselves being rich. It greatly comforteth the afflicted spirit, and lifteth up the heart of such poor, and doth in some sort strengthen them in their well-doing. Those rich men do not well, then, who do in their high esteem of themselves despise the poor, and hold them very dissemblers in their profession, supposing without charity that the poor cannot be religious, when yet of the poor for the most part God chooseth his people, James ii.

*Hearest thou not, my daughter?* Thus lovingly he speaketh unto her. And we find in Scripture that two sorts of persons thus spoke unto others: the elder unto the younger, as Eli to Samuel, Boaz here to Ruth; and men of authority to inferiors, so spake Joshua unto Achan, Joshua vii., and Joab unto Ahimaaz, 2 Sam. xviii. 22. From this courteous speech of Boaz, both as an old man, and also indeed as a man of authority, as appeareth in ver. 1 and chap. iv. 1, we learn,

I. That an humble and merciful man speaketh kindly where he wisheth well, as also Joseph did to his brethren, Jonathan to David in distress, and Job

to the poor. Humility is not high-minded, and mercy is compassionate, love cannot be rough-hewed, and therefore such as have these graces will be courteous, and cannot but use good terms, especially to the poor and needy; which condemneth those as void of humility, mercy, and love, which are like churlish Nabals, and not like blessed Boaz unto the honest and painful poor.

II. That the ancient in years, and men in authority, are to behave themselves as fathers unto others, for so are they called, 1 Sam. iii. 6, Joshua vii. 19, 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 2 Kings v. 12; and this must be in instruction and good example; and the magistrate in correcting, not with rigour, but as a father with mercy and compassion, punishing the sin but loving the person as a father doth. It is a foul fault for the grey-headed to be more child-like than father-like, and for a magistrate to shew rather cruelty than compassion. It were good for such to remember that they are as fathers, that the world is unstable, that their turn may come to stand in need of mercy, and they should think that God made the one as well as the other. This made Job to carry himself gently and humbly towards his inferiors, Job xxxi. 15. And here let such as be in authority be reverenced and loved as fathers; and beware that the ancient in years be not despised, but rather do them honour, Lev. xix. 32, for old age is 'a crown of glory when it is fonnd in the way of righteousness,' Prox. xvi. 31. Let the children devoured which mocked the old prophet Elisha be a warning to all such to take heed; and remember Korah his rebellion against authority, and how the Lord punished it.

*Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.* In harvest all work that can; men and women are here sent into the field, and continued working. It is the time of reaping and carrying in God's blessings given, and therefore may none be idle. To come to the matter between Boaz and Ruth, we see how before he in a loving term spake to her; here he expresseth his love in deeds, both in these and the words following in the next verse. Note, that the goodness of a merciful good man stands not only in loving terms, nor in fair words, without good deeds; both words and deeds are necessary to comfort the afflicted, with both which Boaz declareth his love to Ruth. He alloweth her to glean amongst the sheaves, he warneth her not to go any whither else, he willeth her to keep with his maidens, and to follow his reapers, to eat victuals with them. Thus let men shew mercy in word and deed, 1 John iii. 18; we may not do well and speak uncomfortably, neither may we give good words and neglect good deeds, as some in St James's time did, James ii., and too many now do. Another thing may we hence note, that women are to keep with women. This is Boaz's advice to her, and it is most fit for sex, for safety, for preservation of chastity, and a note of woman-like modesty, from which such be far as delight rather in men's company, a note of wantonness and of an unchaste heart. Women must company with women, and yet some not with any* of that sex. Ruth must keep with Boaz's maidens, the servants of a godly man. It is dangerous for a Dinah to go to the daughters of the land, a chaste maiden to go amongst wanton, idolatrous women, or a virtuous woman amongst vicious wantons and unchaste persons. Therefore let her which loveth her honesty walk wisely towards both; avoid altogether the one, and be wise to judge of the other.

Ver. 9. *Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have not I charged the young men that they should not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn.*

Boaz goeth on expressing his love to Ruth more and more; and this is here shewed in three things: first, in willing her to follow the reapers into every field; secondly, in his care for her safety, in charging them not to touch her; thirdly, in allowing to drink when she was dry of that which was drawn for them.

*Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them.* Boaz had, it seemeth hereby, a great harvest; for this implieth they were to pass from field to field, and he willeth her to go after whithersoever, and not to lose their company, as desirous to do her good this way, and so to be beholden to him as she should not need to go to any other place to glean. See here how bountiful a merciful and loving man is. So is true love in whomsoever it is, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, and mercy is not miserly, as appeareth in Job, chap. xxxi., and in Cornelius, Acts x. 2. See this also in the Lord's love towards his beloved, his church, fetched from the love of a lover to his beloved, Ezek. xvi. 8, 10–12. Let then our love and kindness appear by our bounty and mercy, as Joseph shewed to his brethren and father, Gen. xliii. 34, and Pharaoh did to them for his love to Joseph, chap. xlv. 17, 18. Love where it is cannot possibly be barren; they therefore which shew it not in works of love and mercy, as need is and their ability will give leave, they are no true lovers of their brethren. People are now most in saying, nothing in doing; they are like the adamant, drawing all to them, and as the lion's den, admitting in all but suffering nothing to go out. It is rare to hear of a Macedonian-like bounty, freely to give beyond ability; or of any like a poor widow which gave her two mites, all she had. If men would give of their superfluities, it were well. Oh that we loved as well the works of mercy, and our poor brethren, and the ministry, yea, but half so well as we do dainties for our bellies, brave clothes for our backs, and titles to bring our persons into reverence with men. But thus much for this.

*Have not I charged the young men that they should*

* Qu. 'wit'i some, not any'?—ED.

*not touch thee?* To *touch*, is in any way to wrong another, Gen. xxvi. 11, Ps. cv. 15, Zech. i. 8. By which kind of speaking used by the Lord, we are taught that the least wrong is not to be offered to any, not so much as to touch them as by way of offering thereby injury. This care had Boaz for Ruth, who not only doth her good, but preventeth evil from her, in laying his command upon them not to touch her. And in speaking by an interrogation, it is not only to assure her of the truth, but it implieth his authority over them, so as they durst not offer her any wrong, but would quietly suffer her to be amongst them. Whence note, I. Young poor women and strangers even then were subject to abuse, and young men too wantonly given towards such. This Boaz knew, and therefore gave them this charge. For youth is vanity, as Solomon speaketh, and lust is as a commanding law over their hearts, except they have grace to restrain the same; and that must be by ordering themselves according to God's word, Ps. cxix. 9. Let youth take notice hereof. II. That Boaz had a command over his servants, so as they stood in awe of his word, else what had this been for Ruth's safety? Neither would he have thus spoken, 'Have not I charged them?' but that he knew his word to be a law to them. And such authority should masters have over servants, who should be subject to their masters, and not stubborn and gainsaying, without care to shew obedience, as too many be. III. That Boaz taketh care of her safety; for love doth not only good, but seeketh to prevent ill from such as they do love and entertain. Such care was in Lot towards his guests, Gen. xix., and in the old man of Gibeah towards the Levite, Judges xix. 16, 23; for this is a fruit of love, and also of faithfulness, when any one hath taken another into his protection, and admitted among such as he hath authority over. This is an use for magistrates, they should care for the preservation of others by their authority, Job xxix. 12, 17, for therefore are they set in such a place, Ps. lxxxii. 3, 4; and if they have not this care, it is their sin, Prov. xxxi. 8, 9, xxiv. 11; and as they must see to all, so especially to the fatherless, widows, and strangers, and poor labourers, Exod. xxii., Mal. iii. 5, for wrong offered to these greatly displeaseth God, which he threateneth to revenge. And this should teach governors of families so to rule and order their families, as they suffer not one to wrong another; that their eyes be upon them so as they should not dare to offend against honesty and chastity, by sitting among and dallying with young women, by filthy and wanton songs, by any other allurements to sin, which young women are to avoid as they have a care to preserve their chastity; and young men's vanity and wickedness herein must be restrained by their parents and masters. Yet are there some so far from this, as they can take pleasure in the light behaviour and wanton speeches of servants and others, especially in reaping their harvest, allowing them thus, as they account it, to be merry with their tongues to make their hands to work the faster; but this is in comparison a light fault (though also a foul sin, Eph. v.), for some masters are authors of uncleanness, and deflower maidens themselves, like lustful and foul adulterers; but let such remember the wrath of God against them.

*And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.* Thirst will come upon the painful labourer, and it must be quenched. Boaz therefore had provided for his servants vessels for water, which the young men drew; of this he giveth Ruth leave to drink. It may seem a very small kindness to vouchsafe her liberty to drink of the water; but we must know that it was common drink for the best as well as the worst. Saul drunk water, 1 Sam. xxvi. 11; Sisera called for water, Judges iv.; Abraham gave a bottle to Hagar for Ishmael his son, Gen. xxi. 14; and his servant drank water at Rebekah's hand, Gen. xxiv. It was not easy neither to come by in such an hot and high country, water was not everywhere so plentiful, as appeareth by the strife of Abimelech's and Isaac's servants, Gen. xxvi. 19–21; by Hagar's lamenting for want of water; by the miracle wrought for Samson, Judges xv.; for the country was hot, and the waters above the earth soon dried up, the springs were hard to be found, and wells were very deep, John iv. So as this was a very good favour of Boaz to Ruth; and Ruth, we see, in the next verse, took it to be a great kindness, and was very thankful in all humility. By this we see that a work of mercy and love may be shewed in a small matter, as in a cup of cold water sometime, Mat. x. 42, which shall not lose the reward; for it is mercy to supply the want of others for an hearty compassion, how little soever the thing be. This may teach men to be thankful for supply of their want, though the matter be but little, and not to think mercy and kindness to consist in great gifts, and good turns to be done in things of weight only.

Ver. 10. *Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?*

Ruth's thankfulness to Boaz, set out by action and speech. The action was a most humble and lowly gesture; the speech was an acknowledgment of favours with admiration, with a reason thereof, for that she was a woman of another nation.

*Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground.* Thus Ruth beginneth to shew her thankfulness in a most respective fashion, which commendeth to us her good manners, to so great a person. This manner of behaviour was much used in those eastern parts, as we may see in Jacob to Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 3: Abraham to the Hittites, xxiii. 7, 12; David to Jonathan, 1 Sam. xx. 41; Abigail to David, and the servant to

his Lord, Mat. xviii. 26. The Scripture often noteth the civil gesture and comely behaviour of his servants, as worthy imitation, and as a just reproof to the rude and uncivil. But yet here is a caveat first to them which use such outward courtesies, that the same be done in humility of heart; that it be not a foolish affection, an apish imitation, or mere courtly complimenting, being but all shadows of humility, and yet indeed nothing less, as appeareth in the lively colours and public ensigns of pride in such persons, if they be observed aright. Then, next, that such as have these reverent gestures given them do consider whether they deserve them, for their place and person; if they do not, receive them not; if they do, yet not to wax proud in heart thereby.

It may be some will here make some questions; as, first, whether it be lawful to give honour thus unto man, in such an adoring manner? This is answered before; for the Holy Ghost recordeth it as commendable. Secondly, then, what difference between this which is done to men, and that which is done to God almighty? Surely, in respect of the outward act, no difference is there at all, but of the mind, which doth conceive of God herein as God, and so this outward humiliation becometh divine adoration; and of man, but as man, worthy of reverence and honour for his place, his age and gifts, and so the worship and reverence done him is only civil. Thirdly, some perhaps will ask, Whether this may be given unto wicked men? Yes, without doubt, as we see Jacob's reverence to profane Esau; David's, to wicked Saul; and Abraham's bowing of himself to the idolatrous Hittites; for men and their places are to be distinguished. True it is, that Elisha shewed little respect unto Jehoram. and Mordecai would do no reverence to proud Haman, but these had (no doubt) some extraordinary warrant so to do, and are not therefore for ordinary imitation. The reasons alleged for Mordecai are known, and therefore I will not trouble here the reader with them, because they be but weak conjectures.

*Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?* This humble soul wondereth at his so great kindness, though it was but to have leave to glean, and to drink water out of the vessels. She thought it strange, that so great a personage should speak thus respectively to her that was but a stranger. From hence may we observe, first, that the virtuous and thankful persons take most kindly such favours as be shewed them, and do wonder rather thereat than make light thereof, though but in common and mean things, especially if the favours be done with cheerfulness, as this virtuous woman Ruth doth here; for such do look into themselves, and their unworthiness, thinking with themselves what might rather withdraw men's affections from them, than win them to them. They also look up to God, and behold him in the giver, he being as God's hand offering his mercies to them. These things make them to be very thankful, and to express it fully. This example of thankfulness is to be imitated of every one beholden unto others, and justly reproveth the ungrateful, of which there be these sorts: first, such as receive favours, and will not acknowledge them; like the nine lepers, Luke xvii. 18; secondly, such as scornfully refuse kindnesses offered, as they that will not be beholden unto others, because they think they can live of themselves; thirdly, which will not requite a good turn done them, but rather churlishly reproach the party, as Nabal did David; fourthly, which will not help in need such as put their very lives in their hands for them and for others: thus dealt the men of Succoth with Gideon; fifthly, which in prosperity forget their friends, and what pleasure was done them in their adversity, as did Pharaoh's cup-bearer, Gen. xl. 23; sixthly, which recompense evil for good, Eccles. ix. 15; as Joash did to Jehoiada his son; Hanun to David's messengers, 2 Sam. x. 4; or which love a man less, because of his love to them; and so the Corinthians to Paul: the more he loved them, the less was he beloved, 2 Cor. xii. 15. All these are ungrateful. Now, ingratitude is a foul sin, it is a stoppage to all favours, and drieth up the affection of men's hearts; and God punished it in Joash, 2 Chron. xxiv. 25, and revenged it upon the Shechemites, Judges ix. 16, 20, 56, 57; and therefore let us not be guilty of a sin so hateful to God and man.

II. We learn, that it is a great favour and grace for a rich inhabitant to take knowledge of one poor, and a stranger too. This Ruth in her words here confesseth and admireth. For indeed nothing but goodness in a man maketh him kind to strangers, especially poor ones; it is not nature, nor worldly reason. And therefore when strangers find favour where they come, let them acknowledge it a great kindness, and a mercy of God, and a work of his grace.

III. That a godly man, as Boaz, will be good unto the godly poor, though a stranger. And so should we, as the apostle commendeth it to us, Heb. xiii. 2, and our Saviour in the parable of the Samaritan; and we must consider, that we come into strange places ourselves, and need favour; remembering, moreover, this, that if such strangers be Christians, they be our brethren and sisters in Christ, for in him there is neither Jew nor Greek, but we are all one, Col. iii. 11, Gal. iii. 28. Which condemneth the ill disposition of such as cannot abide that strangers should come among them, and that not such as Ruth, of another nation, but such as be born in the same kingdom, yea, in the same country, if they fear any charge to come to them thereby. Oh how would they take on in our uncharitable days, if a poor Naomi should, after many years, return to the place of her former abode, and bring a poor woman with her, to charge the parish! Well, good Boaz did not so, neither the inhabitants of Bethlehem.

IV. Note, how shamefacedness, wisdom, and humi-

lity are excellent ornaments of praise in a woman, as they are here in Ruth. She cast down her eyes, not looking impudently upon him; she bowed to the ground, and shewed humility; and her words were effectual and few, and therein was her wisdom. These three, shamefaced countenance, humble gesture, and fewness of words do grace a woman highly, and do win her honour, though never so poor. And therefore let women labour for them, more than for a fair face, gay clothes, and a great portion; these make them saleable with wantons and worldlings, but the other with the wise and virtuous. This reproveth such as be of a proud and haughty carriage, Isa. iii. 18, which are costly dames, commanding mistresses, but hardly obedient wives; such also as be great talkers, reproved by the apostle, 1 Tim. v. 13; these be shrewd dames, often they breed contention abroad, and some disquietness at home, for want of the government of the tongue; such women as be bold without blushing, impudent dames, which will not cover their faces with Rebekah for modesty's sake, but will go naked so far as modesty crieth shame upon. But they which have to sell think they may be allowed to set open their shop windows. But chaste minds, seeing the deformity thereof, will frame themselves to a more decent and modest behaviour; such as would hold the name of the virtuous, will not so much labour in the outward show, neither go after the fashion of vain persons. Chaste Penelope, a heathen, will stand covered before her suitors. And will Christian women shew themselves so naked, as some do, to the view of all! Oh impudency! Oh immodest show of lightness and vanity!

Ver. 11. *And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.*

Boaz his reply unto Ruth, giving her the reasons of his kindness towards her, a stranger, which was by relation made to him before this of her virtues shewed in her love to her mother-in-law, and in her grace and godliness, leaving her own country to come and dwell among God's people, though unknown to her aforetime.

*And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me all that thou hast done.* A good report, and that to the full, was spread abroad of Ruth, of which Boaz had taken notice, and for which he was so kind to her, as he here acknowledgeth. Whence note, I. That virtue shall not want trumpeters to sound out her praises to the full, Ps. xxxvii. 6. Ruth was made renowned among all the people, and Joseph at length throughout all the land of Egypt, which is God's mercy for encouragement to virtue; and this will those do which love virtue in others. Therefore, let such as would be renowned strive to be virtuous; it is the worthiest matter of praise and commendation; it procureth love, and that true love of such as never see us, as did Solomon's fame, and so Christ's. It causeth an honourable remembrance after death;* it is such goods as cannot be lost;† but beauty may with sickness and age be defaced, strength also may decay; so Haman may lose his honour, and Job may be dispossessed of all his riches in a moment, but virtue abideth for ever. Lastly, this is pleasing to God, to all good men, yea, and makes the angels to attend upon us, as the Lord hath put the charge upon them. And yet the praise hereof is least respected, but men seek praises which be after man's wisdom, earthly and sensual: as Absalom's, for beauty; Haman's, for favour with a king; Ahithophel's, for worldly policy; others, for riches and authority over their brethren; which yet they are no lasting praises, soon lost, and never afford true love in the hearts of men, as virtue doth; which may minister comfort to such as be virtuous, who deserve true praises, and they shall not want them; they shall not need to brag, as the proud hypocritical pharisee, of their well-doing. Grant that many now will not give them their due, some of pride, other through envy, and a third sort of ill-will cannot speak well; yet, when they be dead, even such as did dispraise them will then praise them; but howsoever, they shall at the last day receive praises of Jesus Christ before the angels and all the world, and be everlastingly rewarded for the same.

II. That well-doing procureth favour to the poor, though strangers, at the hands of the virtuous; for this was the cause of Boaz's love to Ruth, as here he acknowledgeth; and this is true godliness, to love others for their goodness. Would you poor find favour? Labour to be virtuous, for God will procure the liking of others, and move them to do you good, as God did Boaz's heart towards Ruth. This is the way to do you good, and not to live idly, lewdly, and by flattery and tale-bearing to think to prosper, which is the trade of too many poor ones. With some for a while they may find favour, but in the mean space they procure hatred of some others, and at length will be abhorred of all. And here let the rich learn upon whom to bestow freely their kindness, and whom to love and respect; even the godly poor, such as be of the household of faith, Gal. vi. 10, for in them Christ is relieved, and such shall not lose their reward, Mat. xxv. 10. If you ask, Who are these godly poor? I answer, Even such as Ruth, which get a good name by their virtuous lives, their duty done to their betters, their painfulness in labour, their conscience of religion; these be the godly poor, and not the stubborn, the idle, the irreligious, swearing, fighting, railing, drunken poor, who are more worthy of punishment than relief.

*Unto thy mother-in-law, since the death of thine hus-*

* Vivit post funera virtus.—*Bias.*

† Omnia mea mecum porto.

*band.* Thus Boaz beginning to particularise her virtues; and the first here is her loving carriage and praiseworthy behaviour unto her mother-in-law, not only while her husband lived, but ever after, not ceasing to love because he was dead, for whose sake she first was occasioned to love her. Due praises can be shewed in particular virtues. See it in the praises of Job, Job i.; Cornelius, Acts x. 2; the angel of Ephesus, Rev. ii. 1, 2. And, therefore, in praising any, we must be able to instance in those things which deserve such praises, else it is sottish ignorance, or gross flattery, or both. Again note, that whom we love for our friends' sake being alive, if love be unfeigned, it will appear when they be dead. This is Ruth's love unto Naomi, David's to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake. True love is a fountain that never can be drawn dry. This reproveth the loose love of many, who can love and lightly turn it into hatred of the same person upon small occasions; such also as can love their friend for his time, but when he is dead, will neglect all respect to every one of his, whom in his days they pretended to love.

*And how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.* This was rare love, and a very great measure of grace, for religion's sake to forsake natural parents for a mother-in-law, her own country for a strange nation and people; she must needs be endued with a strong faith, and an extraordinary measure of love to religion and the worship of the true God. By which we see that faith and fervent love overcome all difficulties, even nature itself; as here in her, so in Abraham, Heb. xi., when leaving his country, he travelled he knew not whither, Gen. xii., and did offer up Isaac at God's bidding, Gen. xxii., and put away Ishmael, Gen. xxi., and all three without gainsaying, cheerfully. These overcame carnal reason, and this desire of pleasing God, Gal. i. 10, made St Paul a zealous professor; faith made Gideon to leave thousands behind him, and to be content to enter the battle with three hundred against many thousands,* Judges vii. 7, 12, and viii. 10; so did Joshua by God's direction command seven priests to go seven times about the walls of Jericho, to beat them down with sound of rams' horns, Joshua vi. This faith and love made many proselytes and heathen to become Christians, and Christians in the time of bloody persecutions to forsake all for Christ's sake and his gospel, as the apostles spake of themselves unto Christ. This faith and love of God will vanquish the world, 1 John v. 4, 5, and will make Moses leave the court of Pharaoh to be with God's people in affliction, and will make Amaziah to separate himself from the wicked, and make light of an hundred talents of silver, 2 Chron. xxv. 6, 9, 10; yea, so powerful is faith and love of God, as they will overcome ourselves, even to make light of ourselves and our lives for the Lord's sake, as we see in the blessed martyrs, suffering cruel torments for the truth's sake, for the power and faith of spiritual love is supernatural, and is wrought and so assisted by God's Spirit, as no worldly or fleshly impediments can hinder them in the way to eternal life. Therefore must we labour for these graces above all things, if we would be masters over ourselves, if we would prevail against all hindrances of our salvation. These will bridle lusts, contemn vain honours, resist Satan and his temptations; and seeing they are so powerful, hence may we see whether we have this faith and true love, if we can overcome our corrupt nature, carnal reason, and this evil world; but if these overmaster us, then want we this faith and love; from which those be far off, who are led like beasts by nature, like sensual men by lusts, corrupt reason, and by this unconstant world, and the vanities thereof. Though they do bear the name of Christians, yet Christ's power is far from them. Note further, hence, why he speaketh thus to Ruth; even to give her to know the true cause of his kindness and good respect towards her, even her godliness and grace. Which may teach, that virtue and grace are the greatest motives to incite great men, which be also good men, unto the works of mercy and bounty to the poor, as we here see by Boaz's speeches; for virtue is lovely to them which are virtuous, though the parties be never so poor. Let, then, the poor labour for grace and godliness, that they may find mercy at the hands of the wealthy, for if they fear God he will be their spokesman, he will move the hearts of others to do them good. Though this be the way to procure favour, yet commonly we see the poor idle and too lewd of life, and yet they murmur, curse, and rage if they be not relieved; for they think they ought to be relieved, even because they be poor, though never so wicked, though they will hardly labour to take any pains to live, when of such the apostle speaketh that they should not be relieved: 'He that will not labour, let him not eat,' saith the apostle, 2 Thes. iii. As this is for instruction to the poor, so the rich, from Boaz, may learn on whom to bestow their favours and works of mercy; even upon the godly, the household of faith, Gal. vi. 10; for in them Christ is relieved, Mat. xxv. 10; in them they do lend unto the Lord, Prov. xix. 17, who will repay them to the full, and greatly reward them, Ps. xli. 1–3. But of this a little before in the beginning of this verse.

* 135,000.

Ver. 12. *The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.*

These words are a prayer and blessing pronounced out of the mouth of Boaz upon poor Ruth, which doth marvellously set out the piety of this man. Here may be noted, who makes this request, to whom, for what, for whom, and why.

*The Lord recompense thy work.* This rich Boaz

prayeth for poor Ruth. Whence note, I. That there is a recompence of reward from God, even to the poor, for well-doing. This the prayer of Boaz sheweth, who else would not have begged it at God's hand; and we must know, that the Lord in promising to reward well-doing, excepts against none, rich nor poor, but will recompense the well-doer, be he whosoever; with him is no respect of persons, but he that worketh righteousness is accepted of him, Acts x.; and godliness (in whomsoever it be) hath the promise of this life and of the life to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Let this comfort the poor in their well-doing and in their works of virtue and godliness.

*Quest.* Here it may be demanded, what good works can the poor do, to expect reward from God, seeing they have no riches?

*Ans.* A good work is not, nor stands not only in giving alms and such like things, for then should only the rich be doers of good works; but many other things are good works and approved of God, and which he will recompense, which the poor that have not one penny may do: as to do the duty of love and obedience to their parents, or to others to whom they owe it; to forsake idolatry for the true worship of God; to leave their country for the Lord's sake and for his people; to forsake their old heathenish acquaintance and kindred; all which Ruth did. And these may the poor do, which works God will recompense; and all other duties which one oweth to another, in any sort, being done in faith, in love, and in obedience to God, they are good works, and the Lord will reward the same; even the honest and painful service of a poor servant, as the apostle teacheth, Col. iii. 24. We see then that the poorest may do good works, though not such as commonly are so called, to the doing whereof the world's wealth is required; and yet herein a poor soul's two mites are more acceptable to God than the superfluities of the rich.

II. The rich, from the example of Boaz, may not think scorn to pray, and that very heartily, for the poor. It is a very rare example to see so mighty a man of wealth, and so high in authority, to be so much taken up in his affection, in considering the poor woman's virtue, as to break forth into so vehement a prayer as this was, as appeareth by the doubling of the words; and yet this ought rich men to do, if they think that the poor are not excluded out of the communion of saints, and that they be the children of God with them, as they are taught in the Lord's prayer. This would shew a great measure of grace, this would encourage much the poor to go on in well-doing. But, alas, this comes not once into the thought of a rich man; he thinks the poor bound to pray for him, but himself not at all, upon any occasion, for them, because he thinks he can pleasure them, but they can no way pleasure him; so he considereth only outward and personal benefit, and not the excellency of virtue and fruit thereof to them and others, as Boaz did.



*And a full reward be given thee.* A good man thinks his mercies and kindness are not enough to recompense and reward the virtue and works of well-doing in others; for he valueth virtue above wealth, and above the price of all these transitory things. Again note, that there is to be expected a full reward for a good work; I say, first, a reward, yet so that it be looked for in mercy and not in merit; for God hath promised a reward, and that in many places of Scripture; and then it shall be a full reward, which Boaz prayeth for here to be given to Ruth: which shall be certainly accomplished in the life to come, and here sometime in a great measure, as it was to Ruth, in giving her Boaz for an husband, which he little thought of in this prayer, that he should be the reward of her godliness and grace. This is an excellent encouragement to virtue and good works.

*Of the Lord God of Israel.* Israel was Jacob's name, and now applied to all his posterity, the people of God. Thus was the true God called by the name of *God*, noting the persons in the Trinity; and of *Lord*, noting his substance and being of himself, as the original words to the learned do shew; and he is the Lord God of Israel, because he chose the Israelites to be his people before all nations of the earth, Deut vii. 6, a type of the elect number called 'the Israel of God,' Gal. vi. To this true and everliving God doth Boaz make request for a full and perfect reward, shewing that it is not in man, but it must be God that can make a full payment to godliness; the full reward is to be given of him, and therefore from him it is to be expected, who hath the recompence in his hand in full perfection.

*Under whose wings.* A figurative speech, usual in psalms, to express the love of God, and the protection of such as be his, Ps. xvii. 8, and lvii. and xxxvi. 7, and lxi.; for as a hen nourisheth and defendeth her young ones under her wings, from the kite and other ravenous birds, so doth the Lord care for his people, to keep them in safety from dangers, Deut. xxxiii. 29. They are safely protected who come to the Lord and trust in him, Ps. xci.; for God hath undertaken to protect such, and he is able to defend them, and he will do it, because he loveth them, Zech. ii. 8. Oh then, let us labour to be of the Lord's people, to go unto him and to trust in him. Men being in danger here, get into great men's service for protection; and we being in greater danger, yea, in such dangers every day, on the right and left hand, from which none can deliver us but God, should not we seek his service for protection! And being in it, let us be comforted as sure of his aid; let us trust in him as did David, Ps. lxi. 4, for he saveth all them that put their trust in him, Ps. xvii. 7, and lvii. 1. Let us in need run to him for aid, as did David, and desire to be saved by him, Ps. xvii. 8, and cxix. 94; and let us rejoice under the shadow of his wings, Ps. lxiii. 7; for his angels shall guard us, and pitch their tents about us, Ps. xxxiv.

and xci.; he will make a hedge about us also, Job i.; and if this will not be defence enough, then will he be a wall of fire, Zech. ii. 5, so sure and safe shall we be from all our enemies.

*Thou art come to trust.* Boaz taketh it for granted that she had faith; for they that come to God must believe that he is, Heb. xi. This draweth us to God, this keepeth us with him when we be come unto him. Now, that we may know what is here meant by faith, we must understand that there be degrees hereof; as to believe there is a God, against all the atheists which deny this principle in nature. 2. That that which we believe to be God, be the true God, even God by nature, and none other; and that he is not many, but one God only, against all idolaters and worshippers of false gods. 3. That he be such a one as he revealeth himself in his word, and so conceived of, and no otherwise, a spirit, true, just, merciful, almighty, and so forth, against all carnal conceits and fleshly apprehensions of God, as is in the ignorant multitude and the blind papists our adversaries. 4. That we have sure confidence in him, wholly relying upon him and commending ourselves so to his protection, as unto a safe place, where we think to be sure; and so the word in the original* is here used. The knowledge hereof should make us to examine our faith, whether we thus trust in him and have the saving faith which maketh not ashamed. Such a faith is, first, without hypocrisy, being faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5. Secondly, it is accompanied with the Spirit of God, Gal. iii. 14. Thirdly, Where it is, there is inward peace of conscience, Rom. v. 1, and freedom to draw nigh to God with boldness, Heb. iv. Fourthly, It sheweth itself in a godly conversation, Eph. iii. 12; for the heart is purged and pure, Acts xv. 9, and a good conscience is joined with it, 1 Tim. i. 5; it worketh also by love, Gal. v. 6, and sheweth itself by works, James ii. 7, and so causeth obedience to the good pleasure and will of God, as we may see in Noah building the ark, and in Abraham offering up Isaac, Heb. xi. Fifthly and lastly, It maketh us to rejoice in the means of salvation, Acts xiii. 48, and to be of one heart and soul with the believers, and such as we perceive to fear God, Acts iv. 32. By all which, our faith may be examined; and by these may we know how little there is in men in these days. Where and when there is such hypocrisy, so little true love of the word, or of them that love it, and so much wickedness and lewdness, they make open proclamation that this grace of true saving faith was never grafted in their hearts.

Ver. 13. *Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.*

Ruth's speech unto Boaz, acknowledging his favour with great humility, shewing what it wrought in her, and the reason also thereof, with a debasing of herself as inferior to his servants.

*Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight.* These words may be read two ways: either thus as here, and then they shew Ruth's desire of the countenance of his favour. For the poor do not only desire to get the rich man's good will, but would gladly have it continued. And a thankful mind seeketh the continuance of undeserved favours, and not Hanun's part, 2 Sam. x. Or the words may be read thus, 'I do find favour in thy sight.' And it is then as if she had said, 'It is enough that I, a poor stranger, find this favour in thine eyes.' So are the words to be taken, Gen. xxxiii. 15, and so in 2 Sam. xvi. 4. She did not expect so much at his hands, and therefore, knowing herself to have deserved nothing at his hands, she rests very thankful for this so great a kindness; for where nothing is deserved, and nothing owing, there to find special favour deserveth great thanks, which here she acknowledgeth, and in the like case so must we. The choice of the reading I leave to men's will; either may stand, and the learned in the tongue use either, and our last translation in the margin leaveth it free. The thing she either asketh or acknowledgeth is favour or mercy, compassion and good will (all which the word* signifieth) in his eyes. By which word she confesseth all his kindnesses in word and deed shewed to her to be of his mere goodness and good will; and so should works of mercy come from the rich to the poor. The eye of the rich looking upon the poor should work compassion in the heart; then do such find favour in their eyes, when they are beheld and looked upon with respect to do them good. This favour in the eyes is not in every rich man when he beholdeth the needy. It must be a good Boaz that hath such eyes, for a Nabal wants them.

*My lord.* A title of reverence she giveth him. The word† signifieth such a one as beareth up the family or commonwealth as a pillar. This the name *lord* importeth. I wish this title to be remembered of the great ones, that they may shew themselves pillars and upholders of the commonwealth and of their houses, and not destroyers of them. The thing I note is this: It is lawful to give honourable titles unto men as befitteth their place. So did Aaron to Moses, Num. xii. 11; Hannah to Samuel,‡ 1 Sam. ii; Obadiah to Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 7; and Hazael to Elisha, 2 Kings viii. 12; and so did the Hittites to Abraham, Gen. xxiii. 6. So as both such as were in and such as were out of the church used such terms of reverence, and therefore may they be used, as St Luke did, Luke i. 3, and also St Paul, Acts xxvi. 25, herein taking heed of unjust titles, of base flattery, and the excess in giving even just titles. Note again another thing: that the more humble men of good place and wealth shew themselves to be, the more honour they get, as we see

* הסה, *recepit se in locum, ubi sit tectus ab injuria.*

* חן *Misericordia, compassio, benevolentia, gratia, favor,* &c

† אדוני

‡ Qu. 'Eli'?—ED.

here. She did him reverence before, verse 10, in a most humble gesture, when she saw his worldly kindness; but now perceiving the ground to be the love of her virtues, and so himself to be a lover of virtue, she calleth him *lord*, increasing in her honouring of him, as she took knowledge of his worthiness, the more for his love of virtue and godliness than for the outward and worldly kindness. Here is wisdom, and an excellent example, teaching how to honour men truly, how far, and especially for what. This instructeth men to carry themselves lowly which are of place, and to express their love of virtue. It shall not make them be less but more esteemed by much of those that be godly and wise, else were they reprovable. Jonathan's humility and goodness lost him no reverence with David, 1 Sam. xx. 41. They be counted clownishly base, or foolishly proud, or ill-mannered, which will give less honour to a man for his virtues and humility, whenas he is to be esteemed for that cause more worthy of increase of honour with men of wisdom and understanding.

*For that thou hast comforted me.* To wit, a stranger, a widow, and poor, even me hast thou comforted by such gracious speeches, so full of mercy and piety. The word* *comforted*, by an antiphrasis, signifieth a freedom from grief, which implieth that before she was not without heaviness in this her poor estate; for a widow, poor and a stranger in the place of her abode, how can she not be sad and pensive? Afflictions are not joyous to any for the present; they will make sad the heart of the best for a while, so long as we carry about this corrupt heart and nature of ours; and therefore let men look upon the afflicted with compassion to comfort them. Many ways did Boaz comfort poor Ruth. First, by a loving appellation, calling her his daughter, ver. 8. Secondly, by allowing her to glean in his fields, and willing her so to continue with his maidens, vers. 8, 9. Thirdly, by charging his servants in her hearing not to touch her, ver. 9. Fourthly, by granting her freedom to drink with his servants when she should be thirsty. Fifthly, by commending her virtues, and making mention of her former well-doing. And sixthly, in heartily praying for her. Thus may the poor afflicted be comforted by the wealthy and persons of authority, and especially in praising their virtues and praying for them, for the godly esteem highly of the prayers of the godly, for they know that God heareth them. The prayer of faith and fervency of spirit availeth much, James v. 16, and God hath promised to hear one for another, Gen. xx. 7, Job xlii. 8; and it is a sign of the Lord's great displeasure when he will not have one to pray for others, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, Jer. vii. 16, and xi. 14, and xiv. 11. Therefore, let us make much of the prayers of the godly, for they are comfortable. St Paul besought the saints to pray for him, and that very often; and this he doth almost in every epistle, he entreateth the Romans, Rom. xv. 30; Ephesians, Eph. vi. 18; Philippians, Philip. i. 19; Corinthians, 2 Cor. i. 11; Thessalonians, 2 Thes. iii. 1, 1 Thes. v. 25; Colossians, Col. iv. 3; the Hebrews, Heb. xiii. 18, 19; all but the backsliding Galatians, a thing worthy of note.

*And for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid.* This sheweth wherein she took the greatest comfort, even in his last words, in praising her virtues, and praying for her, which sheweth what it is wherein the godly poor take special comfort, even in their good name for well-doing, and in the prayers of such as be godly. To be praised of the godly for well-doing is great comfort, for they be the best judges thereof, and they be the best men, and their prayers, as before is noted, are available with God. Let us, then, strive to get a good name with them, and to have their prayers and requests to God for us; and when we get these let us be comforted therein. The word translated *friendly* is in the Hebrew* *to the heart*, and so the Septuagint translate it, The heart is affected with comfortable words. Thus Joseph also spake to the heart of his brethren, Gen. l. 21, for the heart in adversity wisheth comfort, and when the same is offered it rejoiceth therein. Therefore must we so speak to the afflicted, as we may make glad the heart of the oppressed. So doth the Lord speak to his people, Hosea ii. 14, and so commandeth he his prophets to speak unto them, Isa. xl. 2. Now, to speak to the heart of another is thus, first, when we speak with a feeling of their afflictions from our own hearts; thus the Jews comforted Mary and Martha, John xi. 19. The Syriac there is, they spake with their heart; and so spake St Paul to the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. ii. 11. And secondly, to speak such things as tend to their comfort, and what we know in their case may comfort them, as Joseph did to his brethren, Gen. l. 21; and as the prophet Isaiah sheweth in chap. xl. 2. If this be our duty and our mercy to the distressed, then they offend against mercy and charity who speak uncomfortably unto the afflicted, as the Jews did to our Saviour upon the cross, and the friends of Job unto Job, which much displeased the Lord, and kindled his wrath against them. Boaz before called her his daughter, but she nameth herself to be his handmaid, a term of humility, and a note of modesty in herself, who was nothing lifted up with a proud conceit of herself for all his favour and commendations; for godly and humble persons are in themselves no whit the higher minded for the good that is spoken of them, nor for the countenance of great persons towards them, for they truly know themselves to be nothing, and that all is from God, the fountain of goodness. Therefore there is no danger to praise these upon just cause to their faces for their comfort, as Boaz doth Ruth here, especially being in a low estate and in affliction.

*Though I be not like one of thine handmaidens.* Thus

* נחם Gen. xxiv. 67.

* על לב ἐπὶ καρδίαν.

doth Ruth debase herself, for such as be truly religious have a low esteem of themselves. The examples are pregnant; in Moses, Exodus iii. 13; Gideon, Judges vi. 15; Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 24; and the centurion, who held himself not worthy that Christ should come under the roof of his house, so lowly thought he of himself. Because they know and feel their infirmities, they have overmastered pride and self-love, they acknowledge that in themselves, that is, in their flesh, dwelleth no good, and therefore they think and speak of themselves very humbly. Which grace we must labour for, for it will procure love, yea, honour; for he that humbleth himself shall be exalted, Prov. xxii. 4, and xv. 33. Now, the true signs of such as be lowly in their own eyes are these: First, they think better of others than of themselves, as Ruth doth here, and as men should do, Philip. ii. 3. Secondly, they be loath to undertake great and high matters, as Moses to go to Pharaoh, and to bring Israel out of Egypt, Exod. iii. 11; and David to be Saul's son-in-law, 1 Sam. xviii. 23. Thirdly, if they be advanced, they receive honour with great humility, as Abigail did, 1 Sam. xxv. 41. Fourthly, in their high place and prosperity they be not of a proud and haughty spirit, as we may see in Joseph, Moses, David, Esther, ruled by Mordecai, and in the apostle St Paul. Fifthly, they scorn no duty, though mean, if it be a duty for them to do, Gen. xiii. 8. Abraham, the uncle, will entreat peace at the hands of his nephew Lot; if Dathan and Abiram scorn to come to Moses, he will go to them, Num. xvi. 12, 25. They stand not upon their place, so as they neglect what is fit to be done. Which justly reproveth those which have too high an esteem of themselves; which pride ariseth, first, of an overweening of themselves, of their own gifts, or what they think to be good in them. Secondly, by only looking upon the good in them, and what by their place and birth they may claim, but not at all of the evils in themselves, by which they have cause to be cast down. And thirdly, by comparing themselves either with their inferiors or with their equals, upon whom yet they cannot look with an equal eye, but with some better esteem of themselves, by some one thing or other wherein they would find themselves to excel them; but they never look upon their superiors, except with the eye of envy, nor upon any in that wherein they be overmatched, which maketh them so proud. The true signs whereof are these, First: they highly esteem of themselves, and very meanly of others, and that often of their betters, as did Gaal, Judges ix. 28, 29. Secondly, they have aspiring spirits, and think themselves worthy of higher places, as Adam and Eve, Absalom, with Korah and his company. Thirdly, they are in prosperity impatient, and cannot endure the neglect of duty towards them, which they look for, as Haman, Esther iii. 5 and v. 9. Lastly, they disdain to be at command of their betters, as did Dathan and Abiram, Num. xvi. 12, and Hagar to be in subjection to her mistress, Gen. xvi.; for they think themselves as good as others.

*Quest.* Here it may be asked, how Ruth was unlike to Boaz's handmaidens?

*Ans.* It is thought she so spake, because she was not an Israelitish born, one within the covenant and of God's people, but a Moabitish woman, of an idolatrous kindred and incestuous race. In which respect she might well think herself inferior to them; for the children of the church are more excellent than any other people whatsoever. David therefore held it better to be a door-keeper in God's house, than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly; and Moses judged the Israelites in affliction more happy than the Egyptians and himself in Pharaoh's court; for the church's children are God's children, when all other are but his servants; they are in the covenant of God, the other strangers; they have spiritual gifts communicated to them, the other enjoy but temporal favours; they are highly esteemed of God, and bought with a price, when the other are accounted but as whelps, as Christ spake to the Canaanitish woman, and are left in their spiritual captivity; they have angels for their guard, and commanded to attend upon them, the other have not so; lastly, they have inheritance in heaven, but the wicked shall go into hell, and all the people which forget God. And therefore in this respect Ruth might speak truly, though now she was become a proselyte, and so was to be held as one of the Lord's people.

Ver. 14. *And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.*

The last words of Boaz in this first conference with Ruth, still expressing more and more his love unto her: first, in calling her to their victuals; then, in giving her some himself, even so much as was sufficient for the present, and more also, for she left thereof. So here Boaz inviteth her to dine with them; then she sitteth down, he welcometh her, and she eateth and is sufficed.

*And Boaz said unto her.* The more thankful she shewed herself, the more favour she found; for thankfulness and humility increase favour, as we see here. Which two virtues are so lovely, as they draw the liking of all men unto them. Humility graceth a man's person, and another thinketh himself honoured by a humble carriage towards him, and thanks is the praising of his goodness, and an acknowledgment of being beholden, which do much move men's hearts unto kindness and favour. Very thankful was St Paul, Philip. iv. 15, and so was David, 1 Sam. xxx. 26, to them which did them good, whose examples we must follow.

*At meal-time come thou hither.* Boaz knew her to be poor, and therefore he helpeth every way to supply her

wants; in the field for the present, but he leaveth her to her labour, to provide for afterwards. And thus the poor are to be sustained in their present wants, so as they may yet follow their calling, and labour therein. In saying 'at meal-time,' it noteth that there were set times to eat, and preparation made for it. And so indeed do good householders, as we see in the commendations of the good housewife, Prov. xxxi. 15, for this argueth a care and love to servants, and also preventeth their lingering in their labour, when they need not murmur for their diet, nor long wait for it. This care should be in the governors of families, which reproveth, first, such as can call upon their servants to set them to work, but are too negligent in preparing food for them, wholesome and sufficient; secondly, such as do provide, but not in due season; thirdly, such as will provide in time, but will hardly allow them time to eat, for hastening them to their work. But these cause servants to pocket, to steal, to have their secret meetings, to the great damage of the family, and so make good that which Solomon saith, Prov. xi. 24, 'There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.' This also is contrary to that precept in some sort, Deut. xxv. 4, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox which treadeth out the corn.' And it is contrary to the condition of such as be godly; for such a one is merciful to his beast, Prov. xii. 10, then much more to his servant.

*And eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.* Here is their household fare and harvest men's feeding; they had bread of wheat, 1 Kings v. 11, but the usual was of barley, being most commonly mentioned, Judges vii. 13, 2 Kings iv. 42, Joshua vi. 9, as the ordinary bread. Vinegar was used in hot countries, both to stir up appetite and to quench thirst;* they used also oil, 1 Kings v. 11. In Italy they used in harvest to mingle vinegar and wine and water together. This fare, provided for Boaz's family, he allowed Ruth to eat of; for a merciful man will not only relieve the poor abroad, but sometimes at home with the food of his family, as Job did, Job xxxi. 17, 18. He limits not his goodness, but is ready to help as he seeth occasion, and as the poor shall stand in need, Neh. v. 18. Let the rich, then, this way relieve the poor, Luke xiv. 13, 14 (and not play the Nabal's part, 1 Sam. xxv. 11), if reason so require. Note again here, what homely and plain fare the godly in former times were contented to live with usually. See this in Abraham his entertainment, bread, butter, milk, and veal; he runneth to fetch the calf himself. Sarah bakes the cakes, and the man dresseth the calf, for which the strangers stay. Poor feeding had the prophets; though Elisha bade set on the great pot, 2 Kings iv. 38, it was but homely fare. They were not so dainty-toothed as now men be, which can eat nothing but what is finely cooked. The first sweet tooth that in Scripture I do read of was old Isaac, Gen. xxvii. 4; he loved savoury meat which Esau provided for him, in whom he took such pleasure for his venison and sweet meats, that he would have turned the blessing due to Jacob upon him, which that profane Esau had formerly sold for a mess of pottage, in the sale of his birthright. The godly should not eat for the palate, and to please appetite, but to preserve nature, which is contented with a little, and wholesome, though it want the dainty cooking. Hungry stomachs, and bodies well laboured, will not much care for sauce; this daintiness ariseth of idleness, and too much plenty, which do breed diseases, and shorten life in many. Let these nice stomachs know that Esau who, no doubt fed daintily, that could provide so well for his father, yet, when he came once home hungry, could be glad of a hunter's fare, and sup up a mess of pottage; such a delicate cook is hunger, which can season and make savoury very homely cheer. They that despise plain feeding, and love to fare delicately every day, must remember that it was the practice of him that went to hell, he fared deliciously every day, Luke xvi. 19. This hardens the heart of such, not to regard the poor, as it did his. This is chargeable, and bringeth unto poverty, Prov. xxi. 16, and withholdeth men from doing good works; for three things have destroyed charity among us in rich men and gentlemen, as they be called, to wit, costly buildings, costly raiment, and costly fare. Lastly, this engendereth lust; whence follow many enormities in them which follow idleness, one of the sins of Sodom, Ezek. xvi. This moderate feeding, and homely wholesome fare, which formerly men were content to feed upon, may reprove the daintiness of servants, which now-a-days will hardly be content with such fare in their master's service, as when, after coming to their own hand, they would be glad of the worst bit thereof; but thus it is when men know not when they be well, neither understand what it is to be maintained of others, till they come to find themselves.

*And she sat beside the reapers.* She did not impudently thrust in herself amongst them, but modestly took place somewhere beside them; whose example teacheth, that free favours are to be modestly received of the poor. It is civility, it is a virtue praiseworthy. And therefore let the poor learn modesty, learn to carry themselves as they ought; they shall procure more favour than the impudent and the unmannerly beggars.

*And he reached her parched corn.* That is, corn steeped and dried, and made for to eat. This we read of elsewhere also as a common food, 1 Sam. xvii. 17, and 2 Sam. xvii. 28, Lev. xxiii. 14. This was of the best food at the table. This kind of food was presented to David and his followers, 2 Sam. xvii. 28, and the same carried by him from his father to his brethren, 1 Sam. xvii. 17, an ephah of it; so Abigail brought to David five measures hereof, 1 Sam. xxv.

* Lavater *in hunc locum.*

18, and of this Boaz giveth to Ruth, noting his kind courtesy to her; for it is a note of respect when the master of the table reacheth of that which is before him unto others. So did Elkanah to Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 4, whom he specially loved; yea, some time thus did our Saviour to his disciples, Luke xxiv. 30, John xxi. 30, which men do now follow, but oftener therein shewing their own good manners, as it is accounted, than making it the token of love, which by these things now in this complimenting age cannot be discerned. Observe hence further, that a godly rich man can be content that the godly poor taste of the best of that which is before him, for such he knoweth are near to him in Christ, and dear to God his Father. He gave not to Ruth what he would have given to his dogs, or what is hardly fit for dogs, or good for none but for dogs. Many, indeed, give to their dogs what might be fit for the poor (an evil sin under the sun, which may cause them or theirs to want), and others give only to the poor what else they would give their dogs, by a too base estimation of their poor brethren. Such gifts are not esteemed of God, though he say that what is given to them is lent to him; but it must be an alms beseeming them, and fit for a Christian to give to a man, and not unto a dog.

*And she did eat, and was satisfied, and left.* As she sat down to eat, being bidden, so she did eat as much as did suffice, and left. Which sheweth, first, her plenty, which is a blessing of God to have enough to suffice nature, for so God promiseth to his, Deut. xi. 15, Lev. xxv. 5, Ps. xxxvii. 3. Now this blessing stands in three things: first, in health, with a good stomach, that nature may receive food for nourishment; secondly, in competency of food, and wholesome withal; thirdly, in God's blessing of the same received, that it may strengthen us. None of these can be wanting to the necessary preservation of life; for stomach without food, food without health and stomach, and both without God's blessing, are not able to save life. Where, therefore, they concur, men have cause to bless God so much for the plenty. In the next is shewed her moderation: she ate not to satiate, but what was sufficient, for moderate feeders eat only to content nature; and that is sufficient which refresheth the body, and keepeth it apt for labour, and not that which satisfieth the unruly appetite, but overchargeth nature. This teacheth us to eat what may suffice, and be thankful to God. Two extremes are to be avoided; the one is such abstinence whereby sufficient food is not received to sustain life, either of a foolish devotion, as some formerly have done, or else of a desperate neglect of life, which is the murdering of a man's self. The other is excess, which is the sin of gluttony, overcharging nature, which sin is forbidden in Scripture. It breedeth security in the heart, Luke xxi. 34, Rom. xiii. 13, and diseases in the body, and so shorteneth life. Such a one as is so given to this sin is a belly-god, Philip. iii.; he is like the horse-leech, which sucks till it can draw blood no longer, but is ready to burst. He is like the fish called *onos*, or the ass-fish, which hath the heart in the belly; so is this man set all on his paunch. He is like the beast called *gulon*, a name answerable to his nature, which eateth that which he preyeth upon, if it be a horse, till all be devoured,* ever filling his belly, and then emptying it, and then falling to it again, till all be consumed: such a delight hath he in his appetite. And such beast-like men there have been, who, having filled their belly, have, for the greedy desire and unsatiableness of their appetite in variety of dishes and delicacies, wished their back a belly. Such *gulons* may from this beast behold themselves how like him they be; but I may say how worse they be; for he is a beast, and doth but like himself, but these be men having reason to guide, and should have religion to bridle their devouring nature and brutish appetite. Lastly, note that Ruth left of that which was given her, which she also reserved to give unto her mother-in-law, as it follows after in ver. 18.

Ver. 15. *And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not.*

Ruth's return to her labour is here set down, and her encouragement in the same by Boaz his love, who charged his servants to give her leave to glean, and that among the sheaves, and not reproach her for so doing.

Before I come to the words, here it may be demanded, whether there was giving of thanks, seeing their sitting down and their rising up to labour is mentioned, but not this duty of thanksgiving and prayer to God for a blessing upon their food?

*Ans.* We are to think they did, though not here noted, for everything is not written which there was done, as Ruth's thanks for her food, which we cannot think she omitted, who before did shew herself everyway so thankful. And there are such reasons to persuade us that Boaz would not neglect this duty, as we may easily admit his giving of thanks. First, his own godliness and knowledge of his duty, and then the commandment of God, Deut. viii. 10, which he could not be ignorant of, and of which no doubt he made conscience. Therefore let not any from hence gather a loose liberty to neglect this duty, because the holy writer mentioneth it not, but learn from other places to know it to be their duty. It was a custom among Christians, as at this day with us. There is a commandment to glorify God in eating and drinking. The creatures of God are to be received with thanksgiving, and are sanctified by the word of God and prayer, 1 Tim. iv. 3, 5; and holy men have used it; Samuel, 1 Sam. ix. 13, St Paul, Acts xxvii. 35, yea, when he and the people had long fasted, yet ate he not before grace. Our blessed Saviour, the innocent

* Gesner.

Lamb of God, spotless and sinless, yet ate not but first gave thanks, John vi. 11, 23. It therefore is our duty, and befitting all, before they receive food, to give thanks; for what can our meat do without God's blessing? How soon have some been choked, and have ended their days suddenly! And do we not remember that the Israelites perished with meat in their mouths! Neither let this duty be put off to children, as if it were too mean a duty for the master of the table. Were it not grossly ridiculous, and a very scornful part, for a man to receive a favour from a king, and then call his child to give him thanks! Our Saviour put not this off to another, nor Samuel, nor Paul: are they not worthy imitation?

*And when she was risen up to glean.* The history turneth again to Ruth, and sheweth what she did after her repast, and the liberal feeding allowed her by Boaz; she betook herself to gleaning again, and returned to her former labour. Whence we may learn, I. That the godly poor, by their favours received, and helps in their need, are not the more negligent, but the rather the more painful in their labours, as may be seen here in Ruth; for they know that such helps are for to stir them up to well-doing, which use they make of them, and not to live idly, as many do, who are not worthy to eat, 2 Thes. iii. The poor are to follow Ruth's steps, and learn, for the mercies of men towards them, to continue painful in their calling. II. That the true use and end of receiving food is to strengthen our bodies, to preserve them in labour, Eccles. x. 17. Ruth eateth to suffice nature, to return to work. The apostle joineth eating and labour together, 2 Thes. iii. 10, neither would he eat the bread of idleness, 2 Thes. iii. 8, nor the good woman commended in the Proverbs, Prov. xxxi. 27. God would not allow the sole monarch of all the whole earth, no, not in innocency, when the earth brought forth without labour, to eat without painstaking; he must dress the garden. Food is the reward of labour of such as be able, and it is a blessing to eat the labour of our hands, Ps. cxxviii. 2. Therefore such are here reproved which rise up to eat and drink, and do eat and drink to rise up and play, or prate, or sleep, or to run to plays, to fulfil their lust; to deck themselves like wantons, the sons and daughters of Belial, of Jezebel; some be Cain's race, and eat to be vagabonds, going up and down begging; some of Esau's race, and eat to hunt and hawk, till they have sold their inheritance for a mess of pottage, and themselves be less worth than one meal which they before bestowed upon their dogs. These should know that they are born to labour, and that godly men and women have so bestowed their time; yea, Jesus Christ himself lived in a calling painfully.

*Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves.* What Ruth desired, ver. 7, here Boaz alloweth her, when he saw her so well given and so painful. So we see how the godly diligent hand obtaineth favour and a blessing, Prov. xiii. 4, as appeareth in Ruth here, and in Jacob, Gen. xxxi., whose pains the Lord rewarded abundantly. This is taught in the parable of the talent, Mat. xxv., in which the stock of the diligent is increased, for God hath thus promised to do, Prov. xiii. 4; and labour is a means appointed of God to get his blessings, who also openeth the heart of the rich to do good to the poor, which labour painfully. Would we have supply of our wants? would we have earthly blessings? then must we labour and take pains. Of gathering among the sheaves, see verse 7. Boaz here is not only content that she should gather by, or besides, but between the sheaves, where more plentiful gathering was of ears and scattered corn; it was more than a common favour, an argument of his special love. The rich are to be merciful, yet may they extend their bounty, as they shall like, to one more than to another, as they shall think fitting. Of which before on verse 7.

*And reproach her not;* or, as the marginal reading is, *shame her not.* From these words note, I. Young men are apt to offer injury, and to reproach the poor women, widows, and strangers; else Boaz would not have given them this charge, but that he knew their wanton behaviour by nature, and how the Jews took liberty to use their speeches against such strangers, especially, perhaps, when they saw her better respected than their own countrywomen. II. That reproaching is to put shame upon one; therefore is such a word* here used, as may be translated either way. III. That goodness and mercy stands not only in doing good, but also in preventing evil, as much as lieth in us; both is here done by Boaz, as is also before noted out of verse 9.

Ver. 16. *And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.*

Boaz's speech, continued to his servants, touching his liberality towards Ruth, who thought it not enough to let her glean among the sheaves (for that he knew she would not filch nor steal out of them), but he commandeth his servants, that they should of purpose let fall handfuls for her to gather, and not rebuke her for so doing. So here is Boaz's charge, with the end why, and also a forbidding of them to rebuke her.

*And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her.* As they reaped, they cut by handfuls, and thereof made sheaves, of which handfuls they should let some fall, as they were reaping, or else some of them, as they were binding up the sheaves, which is the more likely. Howsoever it was, we may note, I. That a merciful man and a godly man is frank-hearted to the godly poor, such as be painful and deserve love. This is evident in Boaz, whose merciful kindness is many ways set forth; he spake to her in a loving appellation, calling her daughter; he admitted her to his table as one of his family; he praised

* תכלימוה.

her virtues, and prayed for her; he bound his servants to the good behaviour towards her, to prevent injury which might be offered to her; and he also did give to her, and that both freely without asking, and largely without niggardly sparing. Now a good man is moved, as Boaz, to this, because he conceiveth the misery of another with a fellow-feeling; he placeth himself in their stead, and considereth his own frailty, the world's mutability, and that he may stand in need if God should lay his hand upon him; lastly, he knoweth that God loveth a cheerful giver. Therefore, here let us in our charity towards the godly, imitate this blessed Boaz; shew our love in words, in deeds, in doing good, in preventing evil every way; and what we do, to do it freely and bountifully. Many will not give, as being altogether merciless; but let them remember the threatening of James, chap ii. 13. Many will give, but not largely, nor freely, without importuning, though they be able, and their brethren stand in need. II. Note that servants are not to give what is their master's, without his warrant: for Boaz here alloweth them to give her; and without this warrant it had not been lawful for them to have thus left her handfuls of corn; for servants are but trusted with, or amongst their master's goods: they are not disposers of them; the disposing is at the pleasure of the owner, and not of the servants, which have no right in them at all. Those servants, therefore, which will take upon them to give of their master's goods, under pretence of charity, or what else, are to be reproved; for it is theft so to do without the will of the owner, Gen. xxxi. 32; and the gift so given, under what show soever, is not acceptable to God; for men must give of their own, and not be liberal upon other men's estates.

*And leave them, that she may glean them.* Here it may be asked, Why did not Boaz rather give her a quantity of corn, and so send her home, rather than to let her abide in the fields to glean? Because he would so relieve her, as yet he would keep her in labour, and not maintain her in idleness. And this is the best charity, so to relieve the poor, as we keep them in labour. It benefits the giver, to have them labour; it benefits the commonweal, to suffer no drones, nor to nourish any in idleness; and it benefits the poor themselves, it keeps them in health, it discovers them to be idle or painful; if painful, it procureth them favour; and lastly, it keepeth them from idleness, and so from a sea of wickedness, which the lazy persons are subject to, and run into, as the vagrant poor giveth us sufficiently to know, which dwell among us, or rather rogue up and down without dwelling or certain abode. Let, therefore, men thus relieve the poor with Boaz; and if men would spare from excess of apparel, dainty fare, idle expenses in keeping hawks and hounds, in following unthrifty gaming, and such like, and lay up that to charitable uses, to set the poor on work, what singular good might be done! The poor would cease to complain, and the rich themselves would be better for it.

*And rebuke her not.* This caveat he addeth, that they might not think his command, to let fall handfuls, was for trial of her, but that she should carry away what they should so let fall, without check. Before he warned them not to reproach her, by giving her ill language; and here he would not have her to suffer rebuke at their hands, for taking what he shall allow her; for the servant is not to find fault with any person for receiving his master's kindness: he may dispose of his own, and the servant is not to dislike with it, in checking the receiver, in whom there is no cause of rebuke, but rather in the evil eye of the servant, as our Saviour sheweth in the parable of the vineyard, Mat. xx. 15.

Ver. 17. *So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley.*

This sheweth the continuance of Ruth in her labour till the end of the day; then, her beating out the corn, and what it by measure came unto; the scope to set out God's blessing, her painful travel, and Boaz's furtherance thereof, as is noted in the former verses, by allowing her to glean amongst the sheaves, and commanding his servants to let fall handfuls for her to gather up.

*So she gleaned in the field until even.* Ruth abode in that same field, as Boaz advised; there she found kindness. It is good abiding there where we do well. It is wantonness to be removing from thence, and not being in want, as many light servants do, who, as rolling stones, which can never gather moss, feel want ere they be aware. Ruth kept herself there where she was well; and so should others do, and reap the fruit of wisdom and constancy; both which appeared in Ruth herein. Note again, from her example of sedulity, that such as love labour take pains so long as they may, all the day till night; for the day is the time of labour till the evening, as the psalmist speaketh, 'Man goeth out to his labour until the evening.' Ruth rested not till the time of rest; for they that love labour do strengthen themselves to it, as Solomon speaketh of the good housewife, Prov. xxxi. 17. And this strengthening is thus: when they labour to come with a good will to work; when they force their own consciences thereto from the commandment of God to labour; when they do consider labour as the ordinary means appointed, both to get an outward estate, and to preserve the same; and, lastly, when they joy in the fruit of their labour, and reap the profit of their hands, Prov. xxxi. 18. Thus should we strengthen ourselves to take pains, as Ruth here did. So shall we eat the bread of our own hands, as the apostle exhorteth, 1 Thes. iv. 11, 2 Thes. iii. 12; which, as before I have noted, is a blessed thing, Ps. cxxviii. 1; and we shall not eat the bread of idleness,

the bread which the good woman would not taste of, Prov. xxxi. 27; it is unsavoury to all that truly fear God, and walk as they should, in an honest calling. This diligence and constant labour of Ruth, checketh those which will not work on the day, to have the sweet labouring man's rest in the night; not in health, to relieve themselves in sickness; not in youth, to maintain old age; not in summer, for heat; not in winter, for cold; but rather as drones, desire to live upon the sweat of other men's brows, not upon the labour of their own hands, as God spake to Adam, Gen. iii. They also are here reproved, which will not be constant in labour, but work only by fits to supply present wants, and to have money to spend, not setting hand to labour while they have one penny, never providing for the time to come, but do rest upon their present strength, to labour for supply of present wants, and no farther; whereby it cometh to pass, that in sickness and old age they must either be relieved of others, or perish for hunger.

*And beat out that she had gleaned.* She was both the gleaner and the thresher. Corn was beat out sometime by oxen or horses treading, or by a wheel running upon it, or by a staff, as here, or by the flail, as now everywhere with us. It was a mean course to glean, but a meaner for herself to sit down to beat out what she had gleaned; and yet this she did before she went home to her mother-in-law, whose house she would not cumber, nor trouble her old head with the noise of the beating; she would bring home all ready with her. She laboured more like a servant than a daughter-in-law, and yet she in love was more than a daughter-in-law. Her service was beyond a servant in labour and travel, with diligence and faithfulness, and her love surpassed and exceeded the love of many natural children. The thing principally here to be noted is that the godly, which indeed be truly humble and painful, refuse no honest kind of labour: Abel will keep sheep, Jacob will do the like; Sarah will bake cakes, even ordinary bread, not like the apothecary's stuff, such as our ladies perhaps will put their hands unto, if their fingers be yet not too fine; Rebekah will take a pitcher and fetch water, yea, more, will draw for the camels of a stranger out of courtesy; yea, Gideon will thrash, Boaz will lie by his cornheap, Ruth will beat out her corn, and the honourable woman will put her hand to the distaff. The reasons are, because such have put on humility, which will refuse to do nothing that is honest and lawful; they know no dishonesty therein, and that it was held a virtue aforetimes to labour in such things as the pride of our times judge base and contemptible, and themselves disgraced therein.* By no means many in our age will labour upon any occasion in any common thing; they have (forsooth) their reasons; they allege birth: but who better born than Cain and Abel, the sons of the sole monarch of the whole world? Christ Jesus, by birth as man, descended of kings and the king of Judah, yet was a carpenter, Mark vi. 3; he had birth to have boasted on, and he had power divine to have exempted him from labour, yet he would not do so. King Alphonsus, doing something with his hands, and labouring so as some which beheld him found fault, smiled, and said, Hath God given hands to kings in vain? Yea, the Grand Signior* by his law, as I take it, is to do daily some bodily work with his own hands; and that law they do observe to grace labour, and that labouring men should not become contemptible. They will allege, I mean our gentlemen idlers, that they have rich parents to maintain them, that they need not work. Yes, if not for maintenance, yet to prevent a world of wickedness which cometh by their idle life. For who set out the ensigns of pride in apparel but these? who prove so prodigal? who live so much in filthy lusts of uncleanness? who maintain play and playhouses? who are the tobacconists, the drunkards, the riotous persons? who of the roaring boys and damned crew, but commonly these? Behold, you rich parents, the goodly fruit of the idle education of your children! But grant they prove not ever such as be here named; may they yet live without callings, and only live idly and do nothing, because their parents can maintain them? Did rich Abraham so bring up Isaac, or he so Jacob, and this man so his children? or did Jesse thus train up David? If he had, surely he had never been king of Israel, for God never made choice of any man to advance him but such as were in their callings. God calleth Moses keeping sheep, so David;† and Gideon when he was threshing, and Elisha when he was ploughing, Amos when he was with his cattle. What shall I speak of the apostles when Christ did call them? Was not some mending their nets, other fishing, another sitting at the receipt of custom? none idle or out of a calling. So long as the prodigal son lived out of a calling, yea, till he kept swine, as base as it was, he never came to himself, he never had grace to repent. These idlers and loose livers yet say for themselves that it is a disgrace for them to mind so mean things, as the men of old time did. Disgrace! Who can hold that to be a disgrace which better men have done? Better for piety to God, better before men, for nobleness of birth, for greatness of state, and for name of renown in the world. Again, who do make that a disgrace now, which God in his word sheweth to have been their praise? This conceit of disgrace ariseth from the spirit of pride and vanity in the sons of Belial. But if conceit of disgrace make them avoid labour in some calling, whether of the mind or body, then would I fain know why they avoid not those things wherein disgrace is indeed, and why they shame not to live idly, prodigally, lasciviously, in riot and excess, in

* *Vide* Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, lib. ii. cap. 48, 49.

* The great Lord of the Turkish empire.

† See what David was when he yet kept sheep, 1 Sam. xvi. 12, 18, 19, and xvii. 40, 42.

foolish pride and vanity, and lewd courses, unbeseeming the name of Christianity. Lastly, these unprofitable members will say they have better been been brought up than to take pains. What is this better bringing up? It is to follow fashions, or to drink and whiff the tobacco-pipe, or to congee and compliment, or to hunt and hawk, and then curse and swear as the furies of hell; or else to handle a weapon to strike and stab, and upon a word to challenge, and so into the field to play the devil's companion, or to play at dice and cards, or to read amorous books, to court a courtezan, I should say a gentlewoman or a young gallant, to vanity and wantonness? How much more commendable were it and profitable to be employed in some good literature, as in the knowledge of tongues and arts? And will their bringing up allow them to live idly? Was not Paul brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a great statesman among the Jews? and yet he laboured with his hands, and never lived out of a particular calling? And was not Moses brought up in Pharaoh's court, and in all the learning of the Egyptians? Yet did he live in a calling, and would be a shepherd rather than live idly, or in Pharaoh's court wickedly. He pleaded not his birth, his gentry, his better education, as these do. It is enough to be a gentleman, as they speak now-a-days, to countenance him in sin, in sloth, in bravery, in contempt of a strict life, to live out of a calling, saving the calling of a gentlemen, a profession so abused to advance sin and Satan's kingdom, as nothing more; yet never read I nor heard I of in holy writ, or elsewhere, that the title and name of a gentleman should be a calling to exempt men from all callings, from all honest labours, and to leave them loose as wild colts without bit or bridle, to their own lusts and licentious liberty, and finally to their ruin and destruction. This is not gentry, but rather gentilism, to be hated of a Christian, the practice whereof was odious even in the commonwealths of heathen men.

*And it was about an ephah of barley.* Thus much her day's labour came unto, which was almost a bushel after our measure. An ephah was ten times as much as an omer, Exod. xvi. 36, which was the measure for gathering manna, ver. 16, and this was as much as would serve one man bread for a day. So Ruth had gathered so much in one day as might serve her many days. Thus the Lord blessed her labour; whence we may learn this, that the Lord can and will give sometime a plentiful blessing to the diligent hand. Thus he blessed Jacob in his painful service, so as he was able to give to Esau a present of five hundred fifty head of beasts and cattle of one sort and other, Gen. xxxii. 13, 14, for all things are in his hand and at his disposing. How soon did he enrich again Job? It is nothing with the Lord to make a poor man rich. And therefore in our labours let us have recourse unto God, because he giveth power to get wealth, Deut. viii. 18. Without his blessing our labour is in vain, Ps. cxxvii. 2, Haggai i. 6; but with his blessing our labour shall take good effect, John xxi. 6.

Ver. 18. *And she took it up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.*

Ruth's comfortable return out of the field, with what, whither, to whom, with her kindness in giving what she had reserved at meal-time from Boaz's table, so as she had a double witness to shew her mother his kindness: the ephah of barley and the food of his table, both which did (no doubt) greatly comfort the heart of Naomi, as appeareth by her hearty prayers in the next verse.

*And she took it up, and went into the city.* She beareth the burden herself. And this is noted to shew how the Lord taketh notice of the burdens of his children, which are of two sorts, either such as be voluntarily undertaken, and willingly for discharge of their duty, as Jacob in his service to Laban, Gen. xxxi. 12, or Ruth here for her honest maintenance, or else imposed upon them, as the burdens of Pharaoh upon the Israelites, Exod. iii. 7. On both the Lord looketh, approving the one and pitying the other, which may give comfort unto the painful, in bearing the burden of their calling, or of oppression; for the Lord knoweth their troubles, their labour, and travail, and will do them good in the end, if they wait with patience.

*And her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned.* By this it appeareth that Ruth did hide none of her gleaning from Naomi, but shewed her all, and this for three causes: to manifest God's mercy towards her, that she might praise God with her; to shew that she had been painful in her absence, and not spent her time idly; and to shew her faithfulness, that she kept nothing from her. And thus should children and servants do to such as depend upon their labour; approve their labour by the fruits thereof, and their faithfulness unto their parents and masters. They may not be faithless, as some servants be, nor careless and idle, as be too many children, who under their parents take liberty to be lazy, when yet they have more reason to be painful and careful than servants, as nature, better maintenance, and the hope of portions and inheritance bind them.

*And she brought forth, and gave her.* After that Ruth had shewed what she had gleaned, she took out some victuals, and gave to her mother-in-law also. Godly children are kind and loving to their parents. If this be in a daughter-in-law to a mother-in-law, much greater is the bond of duty of natural children to their natural parents, see chap. iv. ver. 15, if they be truly religious, as may be seen in David to his parents, 1 Sam. xxii. 3, and Joseph to his, Gen. xlv. 11. And good reason is there why they should

do their parents all good; nature binds them, also the commandment of God, to honour them, Exod. xx., which comprehendeth love, reverence, obedience, and relief; and the example of godly children, yea, of Christ himself unto his mother, moveth them, John xix. 26, 27. There be also rare examples for this among the heathen,* the rather to persuade Christians hereunto, lest they rise up in judgment against them. Let children, therefore, learn to be kind and merciful to their poor parents, and not be like the unnatural imps whereof there be these sorts, such as care not to provide for them, but to get all they can from them; they are not willing to do them good, but grudge to relieve them, and are sick of their lives, wishing their death, to be eased of the burden. Other there be which will rob their parents, and steal from them what they can get, yea, and think it no sin, as Solomon telleth us, Prov. xxviii. 2, 4; yet are they the companions of a destroyer. The third sort are those hellish monsters who rise up to murder their parents; but the Lord revengeth it, as we see in the example of Absalom.

*That she had reserved, after she was sufficed.* It is meet to eat to suffice nature for the preservation of life, and the better enabling of us to walk painfully in our calling, of which before in ver. 14. Note further hence, I. That such as have true love, will spare from themselves to relieve others, yea, though they themselves be but poor, and have nothing but from hand to mouth, as we say. Of this we have here an example, and in the poor widow which gave her two mites, Luke xxi. 2; yea, our Saviour, who was relieved by others, yet kept a bag for the poor; he spared of his gifts to give unto others. For true love cannot but pity the want of others; and such as so love will not hoard up for themselves, and let their poor brethren remain in want, when for the present they have sufficient; they live in hope of supply, and doubt not of God's providence for the time to come, when they give charitably what they may spare for the present. This condemneth the cursed covetousness of such as have laid up in store for many years, and yet will not bestow anything upon such as do need; and also it checketh such as excuse and exempt themselves wholly and always for giving anything, because they be poor. If this plea had stuck in the heart of the poor widow which cast her mites into the treasury, she would have reserved them to herself, but so should she have lost her eternal praises.

II. Such as would thrive, spend not all at once, but reserve somewhat both for themselves and for others. Ruth ate, she was sufficed, and reserved some for afterwards for her mother and herself; she was not riotous and wasteful because she had more than did suffice for the present: for such as be painful know how they come by that which they have; they also know it to be a virtue to spare and keep what necessity causeth not to be laid out, neither charity nor pity to be spent; they know that what they have is so their own before men, as yet before God they are but stewards thereof. Therefore from this, and Ruth's example, we must learn frugality, to use God's blessings to do ourselves good; but we must beware of waste, and not let anything be lost, as our Saviour commanded, John vi. 12, 13, when he had fed so many thousands. They then here are worthy of just reprehension, who wastefully consume God's blessings: some on their belly, as do drunkards and gluttons; some on their fleshly delights, bringing themselves to a morsel of bread; others upon play and gaming, idle and prodigal unthrifts, such as this our nation now is too much burdened with; others upon too costly and often fantastic attire, the ensign of pride and vanity, to whom if any speak for their reformation, they reply with words of contempt of others, and careless neglect of their own estate, saying, They spend but their own, what have any to do with it? But these must remember that they must give an account unto God, whose blessings they waste; they must also know that God's gifts are not given them to consume wholly upon themselves after their lusts, but to be stewards thereof for God, and in his stead to do good to others, as need shall require. This prodigality the Lord often punisheth with poverty, Luke xv., and sometime with imprisonment, yea, with shameful deaths in some, whom God giveth over to fall into the hand of the magistrate, for some evil committed and deserving death.

Ver. 19. *And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day, and where wroughtest thou? Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother-in-law, with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz.*

Here is Naomi her question to Ruth, with her hearty prayer to God for him that had so mercifully dealt with Ruth; and Ruth's answer to her again, shewing with whom she had gleaned, and naming the name, even Boaz her kinsman.

*And her mother-in-law said, Where hast thou gleaned to-day, and where wroughtest thou?* When Ruth went out in the morning, she asked leave of Naomi to go to glean, but whither she knew not; therefore now being returned with so much corn and such food, she asketh Ruth where she had been, not doubting of Ruth's honest dealing, but in admiration of God's mercy, and in desire to know who was the instrument of that hand of God upon her. For favours bestowed do win affections, and cause a longing after the party to know who it is, if we know not his person, as here, and also what his name is, and of what kindred, though we look upon the man as Saul did, 1 Sam. xvii. 55–58, that so we might see the reason thereof, and might shew particularly our love unto such a one, praise God, and pray also for him. Now,

* See Val. Max., lib. v. cap. 4.

if this be the force of benefits from man, how much more from God, from whom we receive so many and daily blessings! These should win our affections to him, and work in us a desire to know him, who he is, and why we should receive such kindness, that so we might love him, praise him, and in all thankfulness yield him all obedience. But, alas, upon whom do his blessings thus work? I wish that his mercies made us not forget him, and to forsake him, when we have known him. In this that Naomi suspecteth not Ruth, but rather admireth God's mercy towards her, we may also note that the godly are not uncharitably suspicious of them that be poor, when they know them to be godly. Naomi did not think of any unjust dealing of Ruth, as if she had stolen this corn, nor that she had gone a-begging to get it, or this other food: for she asketh where she had gleaned and wrought, not where she had stolen and begged; for love is not suspicious, it 'thinketh no ill.' Naomi was persuaded that some had bestowed this favour upon Ruth gleaning and working in the field. This grace of charity must we labour for, even in thinking not amiss of others in getting goods, though much in a small time, so there be not apparent tokens of the ill means used in getting the same; for God can suddenly enrich a man, as he did Abraham and Lot, so Jacob in the service of Laban, for 'the blessing of the Lord maketh rich,' Prov. x. 22. Yet if the man be wicked, and hastily is made rich, except an apparent cause be seen, and the means also, he may be suspected; for of such Solomon speaketh in the Proverbs, chap. xxviii. 20, and xx. 21, that they shall not be innocent, and goods so gotten shall not be blessed in the end. Some from hence teach, because Naomi asketh Ruth where she had gleaned and wrought that day, that parents are to take an account of their children, how they spend their time, where they have been, and with whom. Indeed, this will make children to take more heed to their ways; it will discover to parents their nature and conditions the better, and it may prevent many evils, through fear to be called to an account for the same. As on the contrary, this neglect in parents gives children the rein, and so they take liberty to sin, presuming of parents' indulgency, as did Adonijah, to whom David never said, Why hast thou done so? 1 Kings i. 6, which made him proud and presumptuous to his own destruction.

*Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee.* To wit, to shew thee this mercy and kindness; for he taketh knowledge of another, who considereth so of him, as his estate and condition requireth, and thereafter doth him good, as Boaz did to Ruth, when he knew what she was, as is before noted out of vers. 8 and 9; for which here Naomi is thankful, before she knew the name of the man, and here heartily prayeth for him. Hence teaching that benefits received provoke the godly to be thankful, though they know not the parties, and also to pray for them, as Naomi doth here, which serves to encourage men to do good to the godly, though their persons be not known; they shall not lose with them the fruit of their well-doing; for such will be thankful, and will pray for them that God may bless them. And this teacheth such as receive favours to shew themselves thankful to them which bestow them. Now, thankfulness appeareth, first, in acknowledging of benefits received: the contrary is ingratitude, and a note of pride withal; secondly, in praying for them, as Naomi doth here, and St Paul, for his friends, 2 Tim. i. 16; thirdly, in requiting the kindness, as we shall be able, and occasion offered, as David to Barzillai, 1 Kings ii. 7; the spies to Rahab, Josh. vi. 23; Elisha to the Shunamite 2 Kings iv. 13; and the great emperor Ahasuerus to poor Mordecai, Esther vi. 3, which is a reproof to the ungrateful, such as will not acknowledge a benefit, or lessen it when they confess it; they that never care to requite it, though it be in their power so to do it, yea, and need on the other side require it; lastly, such as do requite evil for good. Here we may further note, that a good heart rejoiceth in the welfare of another. For Naomi blesseth God for Boaz taking knowledge of Ruth, and for doing this kindness unto her; so do the Macedonians for the Corinthians' kindness unto the saints at Jerusalem. For such have loving hearts, and are void of envy, therefore can they rejoice and bless God, yea, and pray for a blessing upon those which do good unto others, which grace we must strive for.

*And she shewed her mother-in-law, with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz.* As Naomi did demand of her where and with whom she had been, so Ruth answered plainly, telling her that the man's name in whose field she gleaned that day was Boaz; by which Naomi perceived the good hand of God's providence conducting her into the kinsman's field, whose favour made her afterwards to counsel Ruth to go into the threshing-floor to Boaz, as it followeth in the next chapter. Ruth calleth gleaning *working*, as Naomi did before; for the diligent hand worketh even in that, which otherwise may seem to require no great labour. She saith she 'wrought with him,' not that he laboured with her, neither that she did work for him, as the phrase in our speech doth intimate; but her meaning is, that she wrought in his field with his leave and good liking. In telling his name to her mother-in-law, it seemeth she learned it in the field; no doubt she did ask after it, that so she might speak of his goodness unto her mother-in-law when she came home. And we must know that it is our duty to take special notice of such as do us good, to know them by name, that so they may be acknowledged as occasion shall be to meet with them, that they * may in particular pray for them, and to give them their due

* Qu. 'we'?—ED.

praises to others. For either to neglect to know them, or easily to forget our benefactors, is a fault.

Ver. 20. *And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.*

This is Naomi her speech again unto Ruth, wherein she first earnestly prayeth for Boaz, with the reason why she was so moved thereto, and then sheweth her what he was to them, even a very near kinsman.

*And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law*, &c. When she heard who it was, and calling to remembrance what he was to them, and what mercy he had formerly shewed unto her husband and children, she breaketh forth into prayer for him. Whence we may learn that new kindnesses added to the old do the more inflame the affections to love and hearty well-wishing, as may appear here by Naomi; for new favours call the old to remembrance, and testifieth the continuance of love. This is an encouragement to such as have been kind, still to continue so to the thankful; the latter favours shall keep up the affection of love, and be the remembrancer of what is past, and to bind the parties the more unto them. Now, if this be so with men, how should we be inflamed in love towards our good God and Father, who daily reneweth his blessings upon us! Ought we not to increase in love according to his mercies? But, O ungrateful man, what stupidity possesseth thine heart! Do we not receive his blessings with one hand, and shew our unmindfulness of him by the other? If the keeping of his commandment be the mark of our love, as it is, 1 John v. 2, then surely our waxing wanton against him, by abusing of his blessings, openly proclaim rather hatred than love unto him. This is our unthankfulness, of which we must repent.

*Blessed be he of the Lord.* This is her prayer made to the Lord to bless him. From this note many things. I. That prayer in and by every true member of the church hath been only made unto God. This the examples of all the godly do confirm, and thus are we commanded to do; and therefore the prayers made to saints, angels, yea, or to the Virgin Mary, are abominable and cursed idolatry. II. That it is the Lord that doth bless and make happy, for what is begged of God, that is acknowledged to be his gift. And what happiness, corporal or spiritual, can man attain unto but by the Lord? Therefore, if we want blessings, let us beg them of him; if we have them, acknowledge him the author, and be thankful in cheerful obedience for the same, as we be exhorted in the word of God, Deut. x. 12, Rom. xii. 1. For who can think himself blessed of God, and not be thankful and obedient unto him, but such as be void of all grace! III. That the Lord will bless the merciful. For she prayeth for that which she had warrant to ask; and we find that the Lord hath so promised to do, Ps. xli. 1, 3, Mat. v 7. And therefore let the merciful look for a blessing, and let us pray for that blessing upon their heads which shew mercy unto the poor and needy, that they may be encouraged in such works of charity. And to move them hereto, let them consider God's promise to them, how they be under God's protection, Deut. xxiv. 13, how others pray for them when they do little think thereof, and do bless them, as Naomi doth Boaz here; and if the poor fail of their duty, yet the almsdeed ascendeth up to God, Acts x. 4, and the work done shall bless them, even the back and belly of the poor, Job xxxi. 20. Let these things move the rich to do works of mercy, and to rejoice therein. IV. That the poor's reward unto the rich for their works of charity is only their prayer to God for them. Naomi had no other recompence for Boaz but this; and this is a great requital, when it is a fervent prayer from faith, for such the Lord doth hear, and will himself reward their works, he becomes bound for them, to make good what on their behalf is wanting, which may greatly comfort such as be merciful. And seeing the poor have nothing else to repay back but their prayers, let them not fail in this, not only when and while the benefit is in receiving, but even when for time the favour may seem to be forgotten, so often as their benefactors come to their remembrance, not to fail to lift up a thought to God for them.

*Who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.* The reason which moved Naomi to pray so fervently for a blessing upon Boaz was his constant favour towards them alive, as before to her husband and children then dead; and it is as if Naomi had said, He continueth still in his former kindness to us that be now alive, to thee and me, which he shewed to my husband and children now departed this life. The papists * prattle, I know not what, of benefiting the dead by works of charity, out of this place, by wresting the sense thereof to maintain their error, which I leave as idle and unprofitable, and come to more sound and profitable instructions for ourselves. Hence may we observe, that true love in good men dies not with the dead, but is shewed to those they leave behind them, as Boaz doth here to Ruth and Naomi for their husbands' sake; so did David to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake, 2 Sam. ix. 1; for a true friend loveth at all times, Prov. xvii. 17. David received kindness of the king of Moab, 1 Sam. xxii. 4, and being dead, he sent to comfort his son Hanun, if it had been so taken, 2 Sam. x. 2; for a true friend seeth his friend alive in his children and posterity. Let us then, if we love one truly, not bury our love with him in his grave, as the manner of the world is now, which is full of counterfeit love; but let us imitate our heavenly Father, who loved Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed after them, and promiseth

* Fenardentius *in hunc locum.*

mercy unto thousands of the posterity of such as love him and keep his commandments, Exod. xx. This reproveth such which let their love die with their friends; also such as love their friend's posterity, if they be rich, but not if they be poor, as Boaz doth here. But true friendship maketh no difference of a friend by riches and poverty; for if this make the difference, the friendship is certainly counterfeit. Thirdly, this condemneth such friends as love such as remain of their friends departed, so as under colour of kindness they rob their children committed by the will of their dead friend to their custody; such villany there is in the world, and falsehood masked under the shadow of love.

Besides instruction, here is also matter of consolation, if we consider how God raiseth up constant friends to poor posterities. Though this be rare, yet we have in this place an example, that God is the same in power and mercy to do the like still for his children; but be it that men fail to be faithful in their love, let us be comforted in this, that the Lord is faithful. If he love Abraham his friend, his posterity in Egypt after four hundred years shall reap benefit thereby; if the Lord choose a David, he will for a long time for his sake shew kindness to his posterity. Let this, this I say, settle the hearts of careful parents for their posterity; for if the Lord love them he will not fail them, nor forsake their posterity that shall depend upon him; he is the sure and constant friend, and will not leave off his kindness to the living and to the dead, as Naomi speaketh here of Boaz.

*And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.* It may seem by this, that before now Naomi had not told Ruth of Boaz her rich kinsman, but at this present, as occasion had now offered itself, now she telleth her that he was a very near kinsman, one of her redeemers, which had a right to redeem the inheritance, and so to marry her and raise up seed unto the dead, as the law required, Deut. xxv.; and this Naomi tells her of, to shew how natural affection did in some sort bind him to this kindness which he had shewed her, and also to comfort Ruth in this poor estate, in hope of a better condition, as it afterwards fell out. Observe, hence, I. That the godly wise poor are not vainglorious boasters of their rich friends and kindred. Naomi made not him known before this to Ruth, both for that she would not entice Ruth to come and embrace her company for any outward respect of worldly friendship, and also because she knew it to be folly to boast of rich friends, except they were sure to find them good and kind. Naomi was not as some poor be, which foolishly brag of rich kinsfolk, while yet they find them not true friends, such as will hardly acknowledge them to be of their kindred, either do them almost any good at all. II. That it is then a comfort to the poor to speak of rich kindred, when they shew themselves kind, as kindred ought to do, for *kindred* may so be called from *kindness* in them, and by shewing themselves *kind* to their *kinsfolk* as Boaz doth here; and therefore Naomi now, but not before, telleth Ruth of him, what he was to them. The poor may hence learn when fitly to speak of such kinsfolk, and the rich may see how to open the mouths of their poor friends to speak of them, and to pray for them, even by shewing the true tokens of love and kindred. III. That near kinsfolk are to be kind to their poor kindred, for Naomi giveth this as some reason of Boaz his so great favour towards them; and this natural bond of love hath both reason and religion to strengthen the same, and therefore such as be so bound, and will not be kind, do against nature, reason, and religion, as when parents neglect children, these their parents, so brethren and sisters one another; and yet this unnatural affection is common in these our days, which the apostle condemneth, Rom. i. 31, and also foretelleth it to be a sin in the last days, 1 Tim. iii. 3. Lastly, in calling Boaz one of the redeemers, as the word translated *kinsmen* sheweth, it may put us in mind of this, that the Lord hath great care over the poor, who appointed by his law the redemption of lands to the family again from which it was sold, Lev. xxv. 25, Deut. xxv. 5, 6. And this care hath ever the Lord had, as may appear by commanding to relieve them, by promising to reward the good done unto them, by blessing such as have been merciful, and leaving their praises in the Scripture by publishing their reward at the last day, and by ordaining a law for the redemption of their estate among the Israelites. The consideration whereof may move the poor to be thankful and rest in God; and the rich to be good unto the poor, and herein to imitate the Lord, who so careth for them, as we see.

Ver. 21. *And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.*

Ruth here relateth Boaz's further kindness, both what, and how long, to glean in his field after his reapers, as in the eighth verse, and that unto the end of harvest.

*And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men.* When Ruth perceived the joy of Naomi for this kindness of Boaz, she goeth on to relate further testimony of his love; and it is as if she had said, Boaz did not only thus with me, as thou my mother hast heard and seen, but which is more, he willed me to continue with his servants till harvest be ended. Where we see, that where praises of others are well taken, it maketh the relater to express more fully their goodness. And therefore, to encourage men to give others their due praises, let us receive willingly the relation of their virtues and graces; for such is our corruption, that we can attend to ill reports, which makes many so ready to speak ill of others. I wish our ears open in the other respect, but in this I would we were more dull

of hearing. Three reasons may be given of the relation of this kindness to Naomi. One may be this, to set out Boaz's praises, and to shew his kindness to the full even as she found it. If so, then we learn, that thankful persons conceal nothing of others' kindnesses, either in word or deed, that may tend to their just commendations; and thus thankful should we be. This thankfulness is an excellent virtue, commended in Scripture and practised of the godly, as before is noted; and on the contrary, ingratitude is odious, and causeth uncharitableness in giving, because the poor take not thankfully their alms; in lending also, and that either not at all, for that men be so dishonest, that they will not repay what they owe, or defer to pay in due time; or not freely, but for gain, because men would benefit themselves by other men's money, but will not willingly requite it without compact aforehand. And thus we see the evil of ingratitude. The other reason may be, to know her mother's pleasure therein, and how she liked of it to go still into Boaz's fields. If this, then we may learn, that children are to take advice of their parents in their courses, so servants of their masters, for this is to give them honour; also an acknowledging themselves to be at their disposing, and not their own men, and it will free them from blame, when things, perhaps, fall out crossly. It is a fault for such to run on ahead as best pleaseth themselves; this is disorder and unruliness not sufferable; this is 'headiness,' condemned by the apostle, 2 Tim. iii. 4, and much evil hath come hereby. See it in Esau his marriages, Gen. xxvi. 35; in Dinah her wandering, Gen. xxxiv. 1; in Simeon and Levi their cruelty; in Abimelech's contentious servants, Gen. xxi. 25, 26, and Lot's servants; those might have bred heart-burning between Abimelech and Abraham, as these divided Abraham and Lot asunder. Heady and unruly children and servants may do a great deal of mischief; they are therefore to be advised and to follow advice. The third reason may be to shew her mother-in-law where she might with good profit continue to glean, and also of her willingness therefore to continue in that labour. If so, then we see that the fruit of our labour, gain, and commodity, doth spur on the diligent to continue therein. Therefore pray for a blessing to be encouraged in painstaking, and feeling the fruit, continue therein.

*Until they have ended all my harvest.* They had a barley and wheat harvest, both here meant, as is plain in verse 23. These words, *until they have made an end*, shew some length of this harvest, and his conceit of Ruth's painfulness, that she would continue to the end, and not give off after a day or two; they note also his love and mercy to the poor widows; and lastly, they set forth his equity and true liberality, that granted her freedom in his own, and not in other men's fields. What further may be observed from hence, see before in the eighth verse, where the matter is handled; here only is the relation of her liberty unto her mother-in-law. In all which speech it is worthy the noting, that she speaketh not a word of Boaz's great commendation of her own self, ver. 11. Which commendeth to us in her modesty, that is, to pass over our own praises, which is an example for our imitation, that we might not be condemned of vainglory, and to be such as be in love with themselves, as those be which love to tell of their own virtues.

Ver. 22. *And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in another field.*

Naomi her good counsel, with the reason, drawn from peril and danger, if Ruth should not follow it.

*And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law.* Here note once for all, that plainly the writer of this history setteth down this conference, repeating again and again *Naomi*, and *mother-in-law*, and *Ruth the Moabitess*, and *daughter-in-law*, which I note to tax curious ears in these times, who can away neither with speech nor writing except all be very sententious, brief, without repetitions, or one word more than they conceit to be needful. God's Spirit, the author of every good gift, be it ever so excellent, taught not this penman to be so curious; not that he would have holy things carelessly and rudely set down, as men censure it, but to humble proud wits given over to a light esteem of holy writ, not caring to read therein for the plainness of style,* that so through their own pride they might perish, as, alas! many of our high wits do, who cannot, in the haughtiness of their own hearts, descend to so low a pitch, nor vouchsafe to spend any time in such homely histories as be in the Scripture, because, as they profanely judge, the style is not stately enough for their carnal hearts. And as this taxeth these proud and profane persons, so also doth it such as do despise or carelessly neglect many good men's labours, only for the plainness of the speech, as if all writings were weak which are void of strong lines. These dainty palates can away with nothing but what is finely cooked, because they come not with hunger after good things, but are carried away more with the manner than with the matter, and so more with shadows than substances, as in likelihood it would appear if they should come to the trial of religion and suffering for the name of Christ.

*It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens.* This is Naomi her advice to Ruth. From whence, note, I. That parents are not to be wanting in giving good counsel to their children: as here a mother-in-law to Ruth, and Jethro, a father-in-law, to Moses, Exod. xviii.; David to Solomon, 1 Kings ii.; and Eli to his sons, 1 Sam. ii. 23–25. It is their duty so to do, and the younger years need it, wanting the expe-

* Albeit, what human eloquence could ever attain to the sublimity of style used in the prophetical books of sacred Scripture, as in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others?

rience of the aged. Let parents perform then this duty, shewing their children what is good, what duties they owe to God and man, and how they should demean themselves well every way. Contrary to these do they which take no care to advise their children, but do let them follow their own swing. Such also as counsel for the body, as the heathen may do, but not for the soul, as Christians should do, Eph. vi. 4, Deut. vi. 7. Thirdly, those wicked parents which counsel their children not to do well, but to do ill, to lie, swear, steal, as many poor do; or to dice, card, drink, or to do worse, as men desiring to be counted of another rank wickedly teach their children by their lewd examples, to their shame and their children's ruin, the infecting of the commonwealth, and the destruction of their house many times. Whereas, such parents as do advise well their children, do discharge their duty towards God and their country, and acquit their souls from the blood of their children, Titus ii. 3, 4. II. That it is good for women going abroad to associate themselves to those of their own sex; for they are subject to be tempted, to be deceived, and abused, being weak in temptation and easily overcome. Let women learn here of Naomi her advice to Ruth, and follow it; let them beware of being alone, as Dinah, or in suspected places with lewd women, or in light and wanton company. It is no good sign of a maiden's chastity to seek to be in men's company, as many do, till shame come upon them.

*That they meet thee not in another field.* Meaning some lewd and lustful men, whom Naomi will not so much as make mention of. Though Ruth named in verse 21 young men, yet her mother-in-law will not name them; she avoids the mentioning of men to her, as teaching her, and so all others, that women should avoid, in their private conferences, unnecessary talk of men. Note, moreover, that it is wisdom to prevent dangers, and not expose ourselves into peril when we may avoid it, Num. xiv. 42, 43. Naomi knew the danger of those times, and how wickedly many were bent, and ready to abuse a poor young woman and a stranger, and therefore she teacheth Ruth to be wise to prevent the same; for if we unnecessarily cast ourselves into danger, we do tempt God, which we may not do, Mat. iv. 7, Deut. vi. 16. It is not 'our way,' and therefore we have no promise of protection, Ps. xci. 11; and God hath punished his own people for so doing, as we may see in the Israelites, Num. xiv. 42, 45; and in good Josias, who escaped not correction, 2 Chron. xxxv. 22, 23. And therefore let us learn to be wise to prevent dangers, and not carelessly expose ourselves thereinto. Nature teacheth this to beasts, much more reason should persuade man unto it; and religion alloweth it, and commendeth that prudent man that seeth the evil and avoids it, Prov. xxii. 3, when they have no just cause to the contrary. I mean the evils of trouble, crosses and such like; for the evil of sin is ever to be avoided, of which it may be Solomon doth speak; yet is it wisdom to avoid unnecessary crosses, and troubles of this life, and such dangers as may procure our hurt, as Jehoram did by the advice of Elisha, 2 Kings vi., discovering the armies of the Syrians unto him, that he might not be endangered by them. If here any object the certain danger that Micaiah willingly did run into, when he went to prophesy before Ahab, who hated him, and such like, I answer, that men cast themselves into danger two ways: first, by the virtue of their calling, either ordinary or extraordinary, as did Micaiah, which men may not forsake for any trouble or danger whatsoever. The other is without a calling. Such fool-hardiness hath no assurance of a blessing; if they escape the peril, it is God's great mercy, and not their deserving; and if trouble come upon them, they can have no comfort in it, but must take it as a rod of correction, to teach them to be more wise afterwards.

Ver. 23. *So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harvest, and of wheat-harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.*

The obedience of Ruth, in following Naomi her advice, and her constant love unto her, in not departing from her.

*So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean.* Concerning Ruth here we may learn, that children are to take the good counsel of their parents, and to follow the same; as Ruth doth here, and as did Jacob, yea, Moses the advice of Jethro. It is the note of a wise child, and a child's duty, if the counsel be wholesome and good, Prov. xiii. 1, and i. 8, 9, and xxiii. 22. And it is a reproof to rebellious children, which will not learn nor obey, like the sons of Eli, and of Samuel; but they paid for it, as ever such shall do.

*Unto the end of barley-harvest, and of wheat-harvest.* All this time Ruth applied herself for profit, as being the time of gathering food for winter. She played the ant, and not the grasshopper, Prov. vi. 8; for it is good thrift not to slack the time of our profit, which God in mercy affordeth to us. This may we learn of the ant, to which the Lord sendeth the sluggard, Prov. xxvii. 24; for riches are not for ever, nor the like time to get them, and therefore must we take the season offered, especially in harvest, which calleth forth every one to take pains to gather in God's blessings for their life and maintenance. Perhaps some will say, that Christ willeth us not to take care, Mat. vi. 31, 34. But doth he will ever any man not to labour? The care which Christ speaketh of is immoderate care, care without faith, or care full of doubting, and little faith, ver. 30; and that which is without care of religion, the mind being taken up wholly with the world, ver. 33; else men may, yea, and ought, to labour for the things of this life, to be provident for the time to come, and frugal in expenses for the time present.

*And she dwelt with her mother-in-law.* That is, all that time of harvest and after. This is noted, to shew

Ruth's love and constant affection towards Naomi, that no favour abroad, or gain reaped by the labour of her hands, could make her forsake her mother-in-law. Hence riseth a good lesson, that children's favour abroad and good gettings should not draw them from their poor parents, so long as they stand in need of their help. For how can children ever shew themselves thankful better than in such a case, where what they get they can willingly bestow it upon their poor parents, so maintaining them, who were the authors of their being, and instruments of God for their education? But, alas, the case is otherwise now. This Ruth the Moabitess, a heathen by birth, may rise up in judgment against such as should be natural children, who having gotten from under their parents, when they see they can live of themselves, they make no reckoning of them, being altogether unwilling to live with them, and most of all to relieve them.

## CHAPTER III.

IN this chapter is Naomi her care to provide a match for Ruth, to requite her labour and love towards her; wherein may be observed her advice, the execution thereof, and the good event of the same.

Ver. 1. *Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?*

This is Naomi her resolution, to provide a marriage for her daughter-in-law. It is propounded with an interrogation, to shew her full determination. Here note who resolveth, for whom, and what it is, and the end why.

*Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter.* Here Naomi deviseth how to requite Ruth her love and labour, which is by resolving to get a match for her; and this she doth, as a mother doth for her daughter, after that Ruth had so laboured, and now was at rest with her in the house. Of the term *daughter* before, and also of thankfulness, how good turns should be requited (which here is Naomi's purpose), I have spoken at large.

*Shall I not seek?* As if she had said, Know it, my daughter, that I am resolved to seek rest for thee. It is the parents' duty to provide matches for their children, 1 Cor. vii. 36. So did God, the general Father, for his son Adam, Gen. ii.; Abraham for Isaac, Gen. xxiv.; and Isaac for Jacob, Gen. xxviii. For children want judgment to make their choice, and are led more by fond affection, or by strength of lust, which is worse, than by reason and good discretion. But yield they were wise in their choice, yet are they not so to do it without consent of parents; but should do as Samson did, Judges xiv. 1, 2, who entreated his father and mother to get him for a wife the maid which he liked. Let therefore parents have a care of this duty, and betimes provide for their children, as they shall see just cause, and so make choice, as one may be a mutual help to another. For this end let them observe their natures, like somewhat in years, in conditions, and body in some sort, that one may be pleased with the other. Then know their religion and virtues, that they may be of one heart towards God; so shall they love one another much better, pray for one another, and have a fellow-feeling in every condition; yea, this will sweeten their estate unto them. When they have noted well these two, if with good natures and graces they can procure goods, it shall not be amiss, to help to bear the burden of marriage. Such parents are here to be reproved which neglect this duty, either of carelessness, wanting true love; or of wicked covetousness, for that they are not willing to spare anything from themselves, though they yet have sufficient.

*Rest for thee?* So she calleth the married estate. The word* is a place of rest to settle in. Marriage estate is an estate of rest; so here called, and in chap. i. 9, in respect of the mind of all such as desire marriage, and have not the gift of continency, they are restless. It is called therefore *portum juventutis;* because youth are tossed by lustful thoughts, as the ship with the waves of the sea, till they be married. *Mulieri* (saith one) *nulla est requies, donec nupserit.* It may also be called rest, for the contentment and delight which one ought to have in the other, and in the blessing of posterity, by the mercy of God. Seeing it is so called, let the married parties labour to make it an estate of rest and peace. And the means be these: first, to love one another entirely. To work this, see the good things in one another, and cover the evil, and wink at defects, and be as blind that way after marriage as they be before. Secondly, to perform duties of love one to another cheerfully; so they have promised, so God commands them, and so the mutual good of both requireth it, and true love will do it. Thirdly, to bear one another's infirmities patiently, for they be one, else this will make them two, if they cannot bear with one another, and forbear too, to keep peace. Fourthly, to take their outward estate of God thankfully, and live in this respect contentedly, let them not think how better they might have been; for such discontented thoughts breed but sorrows, and help nothing at all to quietness, but rather to increase discord. Fifthly, to pray daily one for another, and that fervently, that God would remove the hindrances of love, or give wisdom and patience to bear the same. Sixthly, and lastly, in every discontentment to lay the fault rather upon ourself, than to cast it upon the other. Let the husband think rather

* מנוח of נוח, *placidè quievit.*

the cause to be in himself than in his wife, so the wife is rather to blame herself than her husband. If thus the married would do, faults would be soon amended, and jars prevented; and the failing in these things is the cause that marriage is not the estate of rest, but a miserable, restless condition, and that through their own sins and corruptions.

*That it may be well with thee.* Marriage is for the well-being of such as enter into that holy estate. The husband is for a guide to the woman, and the woman is ordained for a meet help for the man, Gen. ii. 18. And therefore this is for confutation of those which simply prefer single life before marriage; nay, doth not God say, 'It is not good for man to be alone'? Marriage is called an honourable estate, and is commended far before the other life in Scripture. It maketh two one; it is the holy means of a lawful posterity, and it is the estate in which the most holiest have lived, and in which Christ himself would be born, though conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of his mother a virgin. Saint Paul indeed commendeth single life; but not simply, but with respect unto the then present times, full of troubles and persecutions. If marriage be then for well-being, let parents take care to provide for their children matches fit and commodious, for religion, for conditions and means of maintenance, for so shall it be well with them. And let such as be married, so make a right use of marriage, that it may be for their well-being, and the bettering of themselves, which stands in three things: first, in the mutual society and near fellowship of one another, for 'two are better than one;' secondly, in preventing thereby incontinency, and the sinful lusts of the flesh; thirdly, in begetting an holy posterity, training them up in the instruction and information of the Lord, in whom their parents do live, after they be dead.

Ver. 2. *And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor.*

Naomi propoundeth to Ruth the party whom she desireth to match her with, giving a reason, and shewing the opportunity of time and place where to break the matter unto him.

As Naomi affected to do Ruth good, so she devised the means; for a true friend is not in show only, or in well-wishes, but in devising how to bring to pass what they desire, and to effect what truly they do affect. Jonathan wished well to David, 1 Sam. xix. 2, 3, and xx. 12, 13, and he devised means for his safety. Abraham wished well to Lot, Gen. xiv., and therefore endeavoured to do him good, and to recover him when he was led away captive. Where we then wish well, let us shew it, in counsel, in help, in countenance, and not be as such, which will not advise their friends of their own accord, nor help them in adversity, hardly countenance them when any of note frown upon them. Some are friends like Peter, in the time of his weakness, who followed his Master in trouble afar off; some like Paul's friends, who forsook him wholly in peril; some like Jehoshaphat, who can speak well a word or two for a Micaiah, but not stand out for him, when he is sent by Ahab to prison most unjustly. Many friends there be, but yet few friends indeed.

*And now is not Boaz of our kindred?* How akin to them, see chap. i. 1, and ii. 1. This kindred she nameth, because of the law in Deut. xxv. 5, 6, of which afterwards in chap. iv. Here we do see what ground she had to seek this match for Ruth, even the law of God, as she thought. Her ground in thus making choice was from God, and therefore there was more hope to speed, though in man's reason most unlikely. Note, that godly parents seek to match their children where God alloweth. Abraham will not match with the Canaanites, Gen. xxiv., but sends into his own country, and thither Isaac and Rebekah send Jacob; for as in other things, so in this they set God before them, looking to his liking and approbation, that they may expect his blessing. Therefore, let such as intend to marry, marry in the Lord, have his consent, and pray for his presence at the marriage-making, at which he will be, if it be after his will, that is, when parties marry lawfully, and in the fear of his name. Other marriages he will not countenance; as these; first, such as be made within degrees forbidden, though allowed by the usurped authority of the pope's forged vicarship; secondly, with infidels, as did the Jews, Neh. xiii. 25, 26, and into which sin fell Solomon, 1 Kings xi. 1; thirdly, with idolaters, though they profess the true God, and yet worship idols, as did Ahab; and therefore Jehoshaphat his marrying of Jehoram his son with Athaliah, was unlawful, and punished heavily by God: such is the marriage of a protestant with a papist; fourthly, with wretched worldlings, and such as be without religion in truth and sincerity, 1 Cor. v. 10, 11; for if we have not ordinary familiarity with the wicked, with such as be fornicators, covetous, extortioners, railers, drunkards, inordinate livers, idle without callings, and disobedient to the word, blasphemers, ungodly, despisers of those that be good, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, and such like; if, I say, we may not keep familiar company with such, then certainly we may not marry with them; their birth, wealth, and conceited hope to win them, cannot make way for such marriages to them which fear God, and love their own souls. Fifthly, with such as be unjustly divorced; for that is to marry another man's wife, and to commit adultery. These marriages are made after the flesh, where the devil danceth, but God is displeased, and good angels, and good men offended.

*With whose maidens thou wast.* These words are added, to shew what Boaz she meant, and also to give Ruth some hope of good success. For Ruth might object three things, which Naomi in this verse pre-

venteth. She might have said, Alas, I am poor, what hope of one so rich? To which Naomi answereth, He is thy kinsman, and therefore by law bound to marry with thee; though herein she did somewhat err. Again, if Ruth had said, I am not known well to him, and I fear his dislike, Naomi here putteth her in mind with whom she had been, even with Boaz, who had taken notice of her, and had been kind to her, and had spoken well of her; yea, in this she calleth a particular kindness of Boaz to her remembrance, who willed her to abide with his maidens. Thirdly, if Ruth had objected the want of opportunity and fit occasion to speak to him, 'Behold' (saith Naomi) 'he winnoweth this night barley in the threshing-floor.' So then note, that warrant from God, experience of the love of man, and fit occasion to effect a matter, are strong inducements to attempt the same. These made Esther to adventure to go unto Ahasuerus, her calling from God, her experience of former favour, and the present cause requiring, and occasion offered to make trial; and where these concur, let us boldly do our endeavour, with hope to effect what we go about.

*Behold.* That is, see and consider the providence of God; it is as one would wish, it falleth out opportunely, as if God had decreed to bring it to pass. So Naomi observed God's providence plainly, for it appeareth manifestly, where and when he decreeth to bring things to pass, so as we may say, Behold, the hand of the Lord! And this either for good, as in preventing Mordecai's destruction, Esther vi. 1, 3; the widow of Sarepta her famishment, 1 Kings xvii. 10–14; David from the hand of Saul, 1 Sam. xxiii. 27; Moses from drowning, Exod. ii. 5; and Joseph from perishing in the pit, Gen. xxxvii. 24, 28; or for evil, to bring judgment upon the wicked, as upon Jezebel and Jehoram, 2 Kings ix. 15, 21, 25, 30, 36, as God had threatened, catching them as it were in a trap, the one in the portion of Naboth, and the other in Jezreel. For the Lord seeth all things, and his eyes are upon the ways of men, to bring his decree to pass by his power and providence, Job xxviii. 24, xxxv. 21.

Let us, then, cast our eyes about us, and observe God's providence; for so shall we see both his mercy and justice to praise him; it will make us patient and contented under every cross, and carefully to rely upon him, when we see how his providence waiteth upon his promise, good will, and pleasure. Yea, this will comfort us, and make us not to fear what man can do unto us, seeing his hand is ready to help.

*He winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor.* For the threshing-floors in those times, it seemeth, from the first of Samuel, chap. xxiii. and other places, that they were abroad in the fields, as the wine-presses were; and this place sheweth that Ruth went out of city thither. In such a place, David built an altar to the Lord in the threshing-floor of Ornan, 2 Chron. iii. 1. Of the manner how it was made is not expressed in the Scripture. It may also seem that the winnowing was towards the evening in those hot countries, when the wind did arise called the wind of the day; or as in Genesis it is translated, 'the cool of the day,' Gen. iii. 8. Boaz, though he winnowed not himself in person, yet he may be so said to do, in commanding his servants, he there being a diligent overseer, and a helper forward of the work with his presence. Howsoever, this may we learn, that it is no unseemliness for men of birth, of place and wealth, sometime to follow in their own persons mean labours of their calling; as he doth here winnowing of corn, Gideon his threshing, Judah his sheep-shearing, Elisha his plough. This they did not of base niggardliness, as loath to keep servants to do it, but to exercise themselves in labour, which is healthful, to prevent idleness and ill fruits thereof, to be an example to others, as was Julius Cæsar, who would go bare-headed, and on foot, both in hot sunshine and in foul weather often before his soldiers;* and as the Lord Lacy, chief-justice in Ireland,† who took up stones to bear them to the building he had in hand, to provoke the lazy Irish to take pains. Which reproveth those which do condemn them that so take pains, being persons of worth, as if it were discredit to them, and to be basely accounted of for so doing; when yet we see out of the Scripture, men (as these proud fellows hold them) of mean callings, chosen to high places; as Moses from keeping sheep, to be ruler of God's people; so David to be king; Gideon from threshing to be captain over the host of Israel; Elisha from the plough to be the Lord's prophet; so Amos from the herd; Peter from a poor fisherman's estate to be an apostle. And the like we find in heathen history of one L. Q. Cincinnatus,‡ who was fetched from the plough to be made dictator in Rome, and after returned to husbandry again. Thus we see how great men did set themselves to callings (now held base and mean by proud and riotous spirits), and also many highly advanced from mean places and low estate of life, for their worthiness and virtuous industry for which they were honoured, how mean soever by birth or education. Such were these emperors, Pertinax, an artificer's son; Diocletian, a scrivener's son; Valentian, the son of a shoemaker; and of a gardener came Probus. Let our lazy and lewd roysters, upstart gentry, or such as come of worthy ancestors, yet having no worthiness in themselves, behold these, and learn to do as Maximinus Senior did, who, when he was general, did take such pains in mean matters as others found fault with him. But he answered them, *quò major fuero, tantò plus laborabo*, the greater I am, the greater pains will I take. If our youngsters would think hereof, they would not scorn to take pains as they do, and yet scorn not to live in a more base course, unworthy their gentility of which they so much stand, and most unworthy their Christianity, which they too little regard. Whatsoever men's birth and estate be, yet ought they to labour in a calling, because

* Sueton. † Irish Chron. ‡ Eutrop. Val. Max.

God so commandeth, Gen. iii. 19, to avoid idleness, to prevent much evil, which cometh from idleness, to live not as caterpillars, but as profitable members in the commonwealth, to be an example of well-doing to others, and to be the better able to maintain their estate and place, both to themselves and to their succeeding posterity also.

Ver. 3. *Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and yet thee down to the floor; but make not thyself known to the man until he shall have done eating and drinking.*

Naomi her counsel to her daughter-in-law, Ruth, shewing whither she should go, what to do before in preparing to go thither, and how warily she should carry herself for being known till after supper.

*Wash thyself, therefore.* That is, because I would have thee to go to him, make thyself ready, and first wash thyself. Washing is double: first, inward, which the apostle exhorteth unto, 2 Cor. vii. 1, Titus iii. 5; and this is it David prayed for, Ps. li., and without which none can enter into the kingdom of God, John iii. With this washing are we to approach nigh unto God, as Ruth by her washing went unto Boaz. The second is outward, and this is threefold: first, typical under the law, commanded to the priests and people when they drew near to God, Exod. xl. 31, 32, and xix. 10, Titus iii. 5, which was a type of sanctification and holiness, Ps. xxvi. 6; secondly, superstitious, as that of the Jews, taken up of themselves, and condemned by Christ, Mat. xv. 2, Mark vii. 3, 4; thirdly, civil cleanliness, the washing of the body from all bodily uncleanness; and this is here meant and here commended unto us. This outward civil cleanliness is praiseworthy. And this washing was used among the Jews, 2 Sam. xi. 2 and xii. 20, and among the heathen, Exod. ii. 19. Eusebius* speaketh of John's bathing himself. To be cleanly is healthful to us, delightsome to others, and commendable. God required of his people cleanliness, Deut. xxiii. 13. Our Christian profession is pure and holy, which outward cleanness well befitteth; and seeing it is of good report, we are to observe it, Philip. iv. 8. This reproveth two sorts: the first are such as be sluttish, nasty, and beastlike persons, who hereby shew themselves careless of their credit, slothful, or covetous, they be offensive, uncivil, and unwholesome.† The other sort are they which will be cleanly, but yet spend too much time in trimming, washing, and starching, and are so curiously neat, and so careful to be fine and fair outwardly, as they spend their days almost in doing nothing else, and so live a proud and idle life, like the haughty dames of Israel in their bravery, walking with stretched forth necks, with wanton eyes, with tinkling feet, walking and mincing as they go, wanting humility and often modesty in gesture, countenance, and gait. But let them read and remember what the prophet Isaiah threateneth against such lascivious wantons and luxurious minions, in the end of his third chapter.

*And anoint thee.* Anointing had a religious use, as we may see in Exod. xl., Lev. vii., Num. vii. 1, 1 Sam. ix. 16, which did type out the graces of God's Spirit, Ezek. xvi. 9, 1 John ii. 27. This is the best anointing, and to be laboured for. It had also a common use, as here, so in 2 Sam. xii. 20, it was usual, Mat. vi. 17, for God's blessings may be used not only for mere necessity, but also for outward comeliness and moderate delight. The creatures of God may be used not only for preservation of bodily life, but for beautifying of the body and the better setting forth thereof, as it is in truth and not counterfeited. Thus wine is given to glad the heart, and oil to make the face to shine, Ps. civ. 15. And therefore may Christians lawfully use God's creatures for outward comeliness, and to preserve that outward seemliness which is God's own work in us, by washing and by anointing. But here beware of excess, that it be also seasonable, that it be to a good end; beware of pride, of wantonness, and learn to know the time of humiliation.

*Quest.* Here it may be questioned, Whether it be lawful to paint the face, for it is but an oil?

*Ans.* Surely no. First, because this is not to preserve thy natural beauty, by oil to make it shine, but to make a counterfeit face, which is deceit and hypocrisy, which God hateth. We must lay aside all manner of hypocrisy, 1 Peter ii. 1, and this is one of them. Secondly, this is vanity of vanities; for if beauty be vanity, Prov. xxxi. 30, then much more the filthy counterfeit of it. It is great folly, for such spoil their natural comeliness at length, as experience telleth, and the prophet Jeremiah speaketh of rending the face with painting, Jer. iv. 30. Thirdly, this is great pride, for they dislike the Lord's workmanship, and adulterate it, and would be held fairer than God ever made them, and do proudly glory before men of a counterfeit visage. Fourthly, it is not held a matter of good report and honesty, which godly persons should follow after, Philip. iv. 8, but of dishonesty, such being judged to be light and lewd. In the Scripture it is the mark of a whore, and a whorish woman is described, Jer. iv. 30, Ezek. xxiii. 40, and an ungodly woman so practised it, even that harlot and murderess Jezebel painted herself, 2 Kings ix. 30; and we find by experience such to be wantons and lewdly given. Fifthly, the godly and learned fathers have utterly condemned it. Saint Cyprian saith,* it is the work of the devil, and they offer wrong to God in despising his work and framing another of their own. Tertullian† calleth it the devil's business, unworthy a Christian.

* Euseb. Histo. Eccles.

† Read Calvin on Deut. xxiii. 13.

* Est opus diaboli, et manus inferunt Deo, &c.—*De habitu virgin.*

† Negotium diaboli, indignum Christiano.—*De cultu fœm.*

Saint Jerome saith* that it is the fire of youth, the fuel of lust, and the sign of an unchaste mind. Saint Ambrose saith,† they which muse or set their minds upon the adultery of the countenance, do so also upon the adulterating of chastity. So as these godly men think of them but as of whores, the devil's servants, betrayers of chastity, and unworthy to be accounted Christians. Let such, therefore, as never used it beware of it; and such as have, repent; and such as do, abandon and forsake it. For as verbal lying is forbidden, so actual also; such cannot look upon God as his creatures, but as counterfeits, and such as be of the devil's making; they see not their own natural face in a glass, but the counterfeit of another, one perhaps damned in hell for whoredom already. Such as have used this sinful practice, and have turned to God, have repented of this as of an accursed work of the flesh, and as proceeding from Satan's instigation. Lastly, no modest matron ever used it, but chaste hearts have always detested it, and therefore is it carefully to be avoided.

*And put thy raiment upon thee.* That is, thy best apparel, or such as thou hast put upon thee handsomely. Concerning apparel I will speak somewhat at large. In innocency there was no need of raiment. Adam and Eve in that estate lived naked, and were not ashamed, neither was there cause, for that they had not sinned; but after the fall it was of necessity to put on apparel to cover our nakedness, for preservation of our bodies, and to defend them from extreme cold, heat, and from hurts which they are subject unto in going naked. So then, now we should have care for raiment, for ourselves, for such as depend upon us, Prov. xxxi. 21, and for the poor, as Job had, Job xxxi. 19. Touching this necessity of wearing apparel, it is agreed upon all hands; nature teacheth it and need enforceth it, and herein to have not only one suit, but change also for shift, if we be able; for it is lawful to have change of raiment, yea, to wear costly apparel so it be comely. Of which I will speak in order. We may have change of raiment; there is a necessity in it, a cleanliness also, and Joseph in love gave to Benjamin five changes of raiment for him to wear, Gen. xlv. 22. If any object our Saviour his forbidding two coats, Mat. x. 10, we must know it was no absolute forbidding, for there he also forbids providing of money for their journey and other things else; but this was to shew that they were to make speed, and also to teach them to depend upon his providence, for he undertook to provide for them in this journey. And by this experience of Christ's mercy towards them, he would teach them how to trust in God when he was to send them abroad into all the world after his ascension. And therefore the begging friars have hence no ground for their idle life, and for their having but one coat. True it is that to have changes of raiment and to see our brother naked, having no clothes to put on, and yet we not supply his want, were an unmercifulness, if so by our neglect of him he should perish; otherwise we may wear change of raiment, yea, and put on costly also, with changeable colours and ornaments upon. Solomon wore costly attire, so his wife, Ps. xlv.; Joseph, Gen. xli. 42; Mordecai, Esther viii. 15; and Esau in Isaac's house, Gen. xxvii. 29; they wore also garments of divers colours, Gen. xxxvii. 7, so did Joseph in Jacob's house; and Tamar, David's daughter, 2 Sam. xiii. 18; and Mordecai was clad in white, blue, and purple, Esther viii. And as for ornaments, as ear-rings, bracelets, chains, rings, jewels of gold and silver, the Lord allowed them to his people, and to wear them upon them, Exod. xxxii. 2; and so did Rebekah wear such, sent by Abraham for Isaac's wife, Gen. xxiv. 22, 23. They be made for man's use, and therefore the godly using them and God allowing them, we may use now our Christian liberty therein. But here we must observe decency, which is a comeliness befitting the person of every one. And here must be considered, first, age, young or old, for the same colour and fashion befit not both alike. Secondly, the sex, man and woman; for these must be distinguished, as God ordained in Moses's law. Nature itself, reason, and laws of well-governed commonweals, do so ordain also.* Thirdly, the profession and calling of persons, and the difference in place; for some be public, some be private, which must be looked unto. It is therefore reproveable for public persons, out of baseness, not to go as their place requireth; and for private persons to go beyond their calling and their condition of life, although it be not above their hability, for this breedeth confusion and discord, when such also as by profession should be grave, as scholars and ministers, yet do go ruffian-like, it is worthy of reproof and punishment also. Fourthly, the manner of wearing must be observed, it must be comely, with shamefacedness and modesty, 1 Tim. ii. 9, both in men and women; we must so wear our apparel as grace and virtue, and not corruption of heart and vice, should appear to be in us. The virtues which must appear in us by our attire are these:—First, is modesty, for raiment was to cover our shame, and therefore that whorish fashion of going with naked breasts and so low uncovered as some do, is to be abhorred of modest women and chaste virgins. Sulpitius Gallus, a heathen Roman, fell out with his wife because she went about with her face uncovered, and said to her, The law limits my sight unto thee, to which thou art to approve thy beauty, and to become fair and lovely; but to be willing to be seen beautiful to others, must needs bring suspicion of an ill mind and a stain withal. I

* Ignis juventutis, fomentum libidinis, et impudicæ mentis indicium.—*Epist. ad Marcel.*

† Vultus meditantur adulterium castitatis, &c.—*De adulterio.*

* *Vide* Kick. de politeia, lib. i. cap. 10.

wish husbands to be Sulpitius-like to such wives as go thus wantonly bare-breasted, shewing how naked their hearts be unto lustful practices. But some foolish and harlotry husbands do delight to see their wives and daughters to go so; they be like Ahasuerus, who will have Vashti to come forth to shew herself; but I wish the wives in this thing like Vashti, and not to yield to their drunken-humoured husbands to go so immodestly. But they are, perhaps, rewarded as they justly deserve sometime; for can the shop windows alway stand open, and no customers come at any time to buy? Secondly, is gravity according to years, and therefore all fantastic, light, vain, and daily strange fashions, now in one, then in another, is folly and vanity, apish toying, and argueth great levity of mind, condemned by the word, Zeph. i. 8, and by all sober and grave persons. Thirdly, is frugality, for excessive cost is unthriftiness, and herein a great consumption to a man's estate, and an argument of idleness, if men go costly. The rich glutton is taxed for going costly and faring daintily every day, Luke xv., which brought him to hell at last. Fourthly, is humility, for indeed our raiment from the first cause is a sign of our rebellion against God, and that we have lost our innocency; and therefore we have no more cause to be proud thereof than a malefactor of his halter, though it be golden. It is reproved as a fault in the daughters of Judah, Isa. iii., to be so proud of their attire; and we have more reason to weep than to wax high-minded by this covering of our shame and nakedness. I wish we were like one Pambo, a godly man; being at Alexandria and there seeing a woman proud of her attire fell a-weeping,* and being asked why he so wept, said thus, Two causes move me: the one, to consider the perdition of this woman; and the other, for that I, being a Christian, cannot study so much to please Christ by innocency of life, as she doth hereby desire to please filthy and dishonest men. Fifthly, is piety, when, in time of humiliation and days of abstinence, we go as such should who feel the hand of God and apprehend his displeasure against sin, and when we so array ourselves daily as that modesty, gravity, frugality, and humility may appear therein; for why should we not even in our clothing set forth our profession, and thereby grace our religion? And this piety shall appear, if when we garnish the body we neglect not to beautify the soul with learning and religion; for a man in rich clothes, without other better qualities and endowments of mind, is, as Diogenes said, a sheep in a golden fleece. And yet such sheep have we in our English pasture, for want of grace and better education, having nothing to set them out withal but the bravery of their clothing, which Augustus Cæsar called, the ensign of pride and the nest of luxury, *vexillum superbiæ, et nidus luxuriæ;* which we find in these days to be young men's overthrow, a let to good housekeeping, an enforcing to enhancing of rents in landlords, and in others to fall to ill shifts, when their own means of lands and revenues fail them. And thus much for this point.

* Pet. de Natalib. Eccles. Hist., lib. viii. cap. 1

*And get thee down to the floor.* Take the opportunity offered to procure thy welfare. So she is made by Naomi her advice to go to Boaz and to demand marriage of him; which might seem not fitting, but by Moses's law it was allowed to the woman widow without children, Deut. xxiii., to claim marriage of the next kinsman, if he neglected to take her; and it was no more immodesty for women to claim that right then, than now for one betrothed to challenge the man for her husband; for where God alloweth the thing, it taketh away the scandal and offence which otherwise might justly be given, and so others justly be offended therewith; which is not a small comfort against the uncharitable censure of unadvised persons.

*But make not thyself known to the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.* Go she must, but so warily is she to behave herself, as she should not discover herself, nor make her mind known, until he had supped, and was laid down to rest, so as her mind must be shewed in private, and to him alone. The night, and in private, make modest persons utter more freely their thoughts than otherwise they would in the light, and before company. The phrase of eating and drinking implieth feasting, as appeareth hence from verse 7, and from other scriptures, Mat. xxiv., Isa. xxii. 13, Exod. xxxii. 6, 1 Kings iv. 20. So then, at such a time as this, it may seem the Israelites feasted and made merry, as a sign of gladness and rejoicing in the Lord's blessings. Of feasting I will speak afterwards in verse 7. Here note that Naomi held it the best time to speak of marriage, when Boaz had well eaten and drunken, for then are men more apt to speak freely, and to promise their good will, than at other times. This Naomi knew well, and therefore advised Ruth to make use of it. Which being so, it should make men at such times more silent and more observant of their speeches.

Ver. 4. *And it shall be, when he lieth down, thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.*

The rest of Naomi her advice to Ruth, what she was to do when she came to the threshing-floor, observe where Boaz lay, then she herself to lie down; and the end, to know his mind, and what she should do.

*And it shall be, when he lieth down.* After labour follows rest, and the night is appointed for the same, to refresh the wearied limbs. So the psalmist teacheth, Ps. civ. 23, and Jacob practised, Gen. xxviii. 11, and this is the right use of time. Let us spend the day in labour, and take the benefit of the night for rest, with thanks to God, and prayer for a blessing, and

not be as wild beasts, as some men be, who make the day their time of rest, and the night their walking time, as fit to go abroad to raven for their prey, or to spend it in unlawful and lewd courses as ill as theft.

*That thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie.* This is advised lest she should in the night mistake; for wary observation preventeth error. This sheweth also that Boaz had not any certain set place to lie down in, but to lie, as best liked himself, in the floor. In those times they had no care of stately lodging; they were not effeminate and slothful, which make us now to seek for soft bedding, which breedeth lust, increaseth sloth, and maketh the body more tender, and so less able to endure pains.

*And thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet.* Though Naomi aimed to make Ruth Boaz his yokefellow, yet she teacheth her to proceed in humility, to go to his feet, and to lie down there; for humility is not any let, but the way to advancement, and the reward thereof is riches, and glory, and life, Prov. xv. 35, and xviii. 20, and xxii. 4. Let all them which hope for preferment labour for humility, for God giveth such grace and favour; the humble in spirit shall enjoy glory, Prov. iii. 34, and xxix. 23. Upon Mary her lowliness did the Lord look, Luke i. 48. David was humble in his own eyes, and obtained great glory; and Abigail, by so wise and humble behaviour, purchased favour in David's eyes. On the contrary, by pride cometh confusion, as may appear in Absalom and Adonijah's attempt to the kingdom; for shame accompanieth it; and pride goeth before destruction, and a high mind before the fall, Prov. xi. 2, and xvi. 18.

*And lay thee down, and he shall tell thee what thou shalt do.* Naomi was well persuaded of Boaz his honesty, and that he would well advise Ruth; for good counsel may be looked for of those that be truly religious and wise withal, as Boaz was; and there is no doubt of their readiness, whom experience hath made known to be loving and kind. This is it which made Naomi to speak thus confidently, that Boaz would tell Ruth what she should do. But here it may be demanded, whether Naomi did well to advise Ruth to use this means to try Boaz his mind? The manner seemeth not to be good nor approveable, and my reasons be these: First, Naomi her counsel and advice to have Ruth to go to Boaz to claim the marriage was erroneous, for he was not the next kinsman, and therefore she should not have come thus first to him. Secondly, Boaz his speech implieth that it was not a matter of good report for them two to be thus alone together, if they had been seen so. Thirdly, there was some show and appearance of evil, which should be avoided, 1 Thes. v. Fourthly, because here was an occasion of sinning offered, though not taken, nor intended; because fleshliness is that sin to which most are apt, and the most excellent have fallen into it, as appeareth in righteous Lot, strong Samson, wise Solomon, and zealous David. Yet for all this ill advice and manner of doing, the Lord turned the same to good. For this is his goodness and mercy, that matters ill begun the Lord both can and will turn unto good. Thus he did with Rebekah and Jacob's dissembling to get the blessing, and with the selling of Joseph by Jacob's sons, his unnatural brethren. This example, therefore, of Ruth is not imitable. It giveth no warrant for mothers to teach their daughters to play the harlots, and to be bawds to them, nor to allow young women to go to young men, and to give their bodies to be abused, in hope of marriage; nor to make night-matches and meetings to procure husbands, whilst they hereby often make themselves whores, to their own shame and grief of friends. If it be not imitable, will some say, why is it recorded? To answer this, we must know that the actions of the godly are of divers sorts; either extraordinary, as Abraham offering Isaac, Moses his killing of the Egyptian, Israelites borrowing and carrying away the goods of the Egyptians, Phinehas killing Zimri and Cozbi, Ehud Eglon, king of Moab, and such like; these are not for imitation, but to shew that God can dispense with his law, and is not tied to ordinary courses. Or ordinary; and this is manifold, first, good and allowed of God, as Abraham's teaching his household, Job's patience, praying for his children, and works of mercy and justice, Cornelius's devotion, Paul's labour in the ministry, and a thousand such like, left written for instruction, to acknowledge the strength of grace, and are for our godly imitation. Secondly, bad and unlawful, as Aaron's consenting to the Israelites' idolatry, Lot's incest, David's adultery and murder, Peter's perjury, and such like; these are not to be imitated, but to be avoided as evil, and are written to make us to behold man's corruption, and so his desert, that thereby we may set ourselves to bewail the same, to watch over ourselves, Heb. iii. 12, 13, and that none may boast of their own righteousness, but acknowledge it God's mercy that we are not confounded, and that it is his mere goodness that saveth us. Thirdly, mixed, partly good, and partly bad; so was Rebekah her seeking the blessing for Jacob, which God had promised, and here Naomi a marriage for Ruth; but the manner in both faulty. These are written to let us see our imperfections in doing a good thing, and to teach us to examine the ways of the best, to know how far they be imitable. Fourthly, merely indifferent in themselves, neither commanded nor forbidden, as Samson his feasting of the young men at his marriage, David's delight and playing upon the harp, and such like; which are written to shew our liberty in things indifferent, and that we may use the same, so we be moderate therein. Thus we see the difference of actions, and why recorded. And these are we to mark and examine, that we be not mistaken, whether extraordinary or ordinary, whether good or bad, or mixed or indifferent, and even in these how lawful to us, how expedient also, that we may not give offence.

Ver. 5. *And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.*

Ruth's readiness to obey her mother-in-law, and that in all things without exception.

*And she said unto her.* In this conference between them two here is no interrupting of one another; Ruth heareth Naomi her counsel, and answereth when she hath heard it, which commendeth her modesty and wisdom, for it is folly to answer a matter before it be heard.

*All that thou sayest unto me I will do.* Ruth is as ready to obey as the other to command, and that in respect, first, of her reverence towards Naomi, and persuasion of her good mind towards her; for whom we think well of and reverence, their counsel we easily embrace and willingly obey; and yet herein may we do amiss, if we examine not well the matter; for counsel may be sometime from error of the judgment, and sometime from corrupt affection. Secondly, of her own inclination to the thing, being young, and poor, to get a rich husband; for we readily obey in that whereto we incline our mind of our own accord, there needeth little incitation.

Ver. 6. *And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.*

Ruth's performance of her promise, both in going down to the floor, and in doing there what her mother advised her.

*And she went down unto the floor.* The city was then higher from whence she went, though we may read of a floor up on high, 2 Sam. xxiv. 18. It may seem strange how Ruth durst attempt this, being a stranger, and fearful by nature, as women be; yet see, where desire is, there nothing can hinder, or amate the spirit, or daunt the heart.

*And did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.* As it is in verses 3 and 4, so she very exactly followed her mother's advice, and in nothing followed her own mind, lest perhaps, if things had not fallen out well, she might have had the fault put upon herself. Here is an example of strict obedience unto parents, which is required at the hands of children. Ruth doth according to all that which she was bidden to do; and thus in all lawful things should children do to parents, for so God would have it, it pleaseth him, Col. iii. 20, Eph. vi. 2. It is the duty of children, and in so doing they shall be blessed. Let children learn obedience to parents, as Isaac obeyed Abraham, Gen. xxii. 6, Jephthah's daughter her father, Judges xi. 36, 37, and as our blessed Saviour did his parents, Luke i. 51, which they will do if they fear God, Lev. xix. 3, and hold their parents worthy of honour, as God commandeth, Exod. xx.

Ver. 7. *And when Boaz had eaten and drunken, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.*

This verse sheweth how she did as her mother bade her, both for the time when, and the manner how.

*And when Boaz had eaten and drunk.* Meaning largely and freely, as the words following intimate, which it may seem they used at such times as this. We may note, that it is lawful to eat and drink more largely at one time time than at another; as in times of feasting, which the Israelites kept in old time, in reaping the fruits of the earth, as here; so at sheep-shearing they feasted, at the weaning of children, as we at christenings, at solemn times of rejoicing, at marriages, at such times as God bestowed blessings and special favours, or did graciously deliver his people; at the entertainment of friends, and loving meetings of brethren and kindred; at such times and upon such occasions may we eat and drink, and rejoice our hearts. But yet with these caveats: First, to take heed of excess, by falling either into gluttony or drunkenness, or wanton songs, or wanton behaviour, or by foolish jesting and mocking of the godly, as the Philistines did Samson, Judges xvi. 25. Secondly, to keep such feasting seasonably, not in time of God's judgments, nor in the time of the affliction of the church, Isa. xxii. 13–15; for then it befitteth us rather to fast than to feast, Amos vi. 6. Thirdly, that we behave ourselves Christian-like; first, to praise and bless the Lord and glorify him, 1 Cor. x. 31. And here is worth the remembrance, the behaviour of the ancient Christians in their feastings together;* they sat not down before thanksgiving, they ate and drank moderately, so as they would not hinder their devotion to God afterwards; their communication such, as they that knew they spake in the Lord's hearing. When they had sufficed themselves, they provoked one another to speak somewhat out of the Scripture, or otherwise good things to the praise of God, by which was trial made how much every one had drunk, and finally they ended their meeting with prayer. This was a religious and Christian feasting. Secondly, in all our mirth to remember, and not forget, as David saith, Jerusalem, the church of God, Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6; thirdly, to remember the poor which want, Neh. viii. 11. We must not be Nabal-like, to feast like a king, and be without mercy to David and his company needing our relief; nor as the rich Dives, faring deliciously, and suffering the poor to perish at our gates. These caveats observed, we may eat and be merry.

*And his heart was merry.* Eating and drinking make the heart merry, Ps. civ. 14, 15. Thus were Joseph's brethren made merry, Gen xliii. 34; for the spirits of men hereby are refreshed, and let loose, as it were, from cares; and this benefit we may have by the Lord's creatures, and praise God for the same, Prov. xxxi. 6, 7, so we keep a moderation, and use sobriety, as Boaz here, and not become as drunken sots, like Nabal.

* Tertul. Apol. chap. xxxvi.

*He went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.* After his labour and repast, he went to take his rest, not in any dainty bedding, but even in the floor at the end of the heap; and this did he for the safety of God's blessings, and the better keeping of the corn winnowed from pilfering. Note hence, I. That painful labour maketh man not curious of his lodging. Boaz here can lie hard; Jacob, a prince's son, brought up daintily at his mother's lap, can take a stone, and lay it under his head for a pillow, and sleep soundly, being wearied with travel, which maketh rest and hard lodging very pleasant to him; and howsoever Jacob might lie better before, yet did he never rest more blessedly than in this hard bed: for now the Lord spake to him, and he saw God's angels ascending and descending upon him; for it falleth out, the more the body is pampered, the less spiritual comfort; and the less the body is cherished, the more is the soul made glad, and the nigher we be to God. Would we, therefore, not be nice, nor curious of our lying? Let us labour our bodies till we be weary, and we shall take hard lodging without dislike; hunger maketh poor fare sweet, so doth labour make hard lying pleasant. II. That it is good husbandry to seek to save, as well as to get, Prov. xxvii. 23. Boaz was noble, wise, rich, and also thriving, yet merciful, and therefore not base, but yet would, as need required, see to his own estate, and God's blessings bestowed upon him, that they might not be diminished by purloining hands. This honest care of this great man, and good man too, checketh such spendthrifts as do waste God's blessings; they be thieves to themselves, and such as depend upon them; they work their own overthrow and destruction, and in adversity they shall be without comfort; for their consciences will tell them, that they have justly brought upon themselves that evil.

*And she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.* A great show of evil; for she went to a wrong man. It was also in the night, and alone, to him alone, and after his feasting too; a too bold adventure, upon her mother's weak advice in this manner of doing. True it is, the success was good; but this more of God's mercy than the fact deserved. Boaz also commended her, ver. 10; but it was not for this coming, not for the manner, but for the thing intended, to wit, to match with him, she following the rule of the word, and not lust, to seek to young men, whether poor or rich. Here we see what Naomi contrived; she did with as much cunning, as care, act it; for it is said, she came softly, secretly, and without any stir or noise to awake him, and so laid her down at his feet, waiting when he should of his own accord awake. We warily act a thing where we be loath to offend; and there are we contented to wait patiently, where we fear to do amiss, as Ruth doth here. This wisdom can we shew in attaining our desires in things of the world. Oh that we thus could behave ourselves towards God! and that we might say with the prophet, 'My soul doth wait for the Lord, and in his word do I hope,' Ps. cxxxi. 5, 6.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself; and behold, a woman lay at his feet.*

The event of Ruth's thus secretly coming in, and lying at Boaz's feet unawares to him. Where, note the time when, the event itself, the effect of it, and the occasion of both in the last words.

*And it came to pass at midnight.* Thus long Boaz slept after his labour and painstaking, before he did awake. Note, that the wearied body and quiet mind sleeps soundly (so Solomon telleth us, Eccles. v. 12); eat he little or much. If, therefore, we would soundly sleep, being in bodily health, let us labour our bodies; weariness is the best physic to cast any one asleep: the idle cannot sleep, they be troubled with dreams and foolish phantasies. We must also get a quiet spirit, so shall we sleep without fear; and this is to be gotten, first, by seeking reconciliation with God in Christ, so may we lie down in peace with David, and not be afraid, Ps. iv. 8, and iii. 5; Job xi. 14, 19. This made Peter sleep soundly in great bodily danger, Acts xii., and the martyrs, some of them the night before they went to execution. Secondly, by shaking off the cares of the world, Eccles. v. 12, which maketh the worldling that he cannot rest. Thirdly, by suffering no evil to reign in our hearts, as envy, malice, lust, covetousness; for these things will not suffer us to take rest, Prov. iv. 16. Fourthly, to keep ever a good conscience towards God and man; this is a continual feast, and giveth us rest.

*That the man was afraid.* The best are subject to fear, upon conceit of peril, and that suddenly. So was Gideon afraid, and the apostles on a sudden; and likewise Boaz here, and that upon these reasons: First, his natural frailty and weakness of faith, which also is in every one. Secondly, his ignorance, not knowing what it was, because she came in unknown to him, when he was asleep; and in such cases we be more apt to conceit evil towards us than good, because our hearts tell us, that we be wicked by nature, and deserve evil. Thirdly, the dark and dead time of the night, which is to man fearful: the psalmist speaketh of the 'terror of the night,' Ps. xci. 5. We all by experience know, how easily man's heart is made fearful in the dark; except in the sons of Belial, and the children of the kingdom of darkness, hardened in evil, and which make the night the time of their lewd practices; yet even these also will soon be stricken into sudden fear. Fourthly, this fear may more suddenly possess one in the night, as here it did Boaz, being alone: for that spirits have taken at such times bodily shapes upon them, and shewed themselves; for the night is their time chiefly, as may be seen in their coming then most commonly to witches, known by their own confession. Let us, therefore, hence take

notice of this weakness, which so sheweth itself from the love we bear to our body's safety, and natural life. Now, if we fear so much for this cause bodily dangers, oh how much more should we fear to commit sin, and the wrath of God for sin, which bring destruction to body and soul, without timely repentance!

*And turned himself.* He gathered himself together, shrinking, as the manner is of such as in bed being in sleep, fall into a sudden fear, and turn to and fro; such a forcible operation hath this fear upon the whole body, for to decline from, and avoid the danger conceived, nature seeking to save itself, in apprehension of peril, and that of a sudden. This natural fear is more quick and sudden to seize upon the heart than the spiritual fear to avoid sin, or the displeasure of God, and so the danger of the ruin of our souls; for this danger is not so soon apprehended: here is required the grace of illumination, and of faith, before this can be wrought in us.

*And behold, a woman lay at his feet.* The fear possessed him without cause; and thus it falleth out often, man often feareth without just cause: the godly, through the weakness of their faith, reproved by Christ, Mat. viii. 26; the wicked, by their accusing conscience, which maketh them to fly when none pursue them, Prov. xxviii. 1; they think that evil doth haunt them, and peril soundeth in their ears, Job xv. 21. Therefore let the godly labour for strength of faith, and the wicked repent, and seek for the peace of a good conscience, that they need not to fear.

Ver. 9. *And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.*

This is Boaz his questioning with Ruth, her answer, with a request to him, and the reason thereof.

*And he said, Who art thou?* Boaz coming to himself, moderateth his fear, and containeth himself from unchaste touching, and demandeth what she was. We may note, first, though fear possess wise and godly men upon a sudden, yet they moderate it, and are not wholly overcome therewith, for Boaz here crieth not out to servants for help, neither speaketh to her as one amazed, neither falleth he into a rage with her, that she should be occasion of such fear, for howsoever the fear suddenly seized upon him, being fast in sleep before, yet was it not childish nor womanish; he soon shook it off as a man of courage, having confidence in God. He mastered his natural fear, and so should we, and not be overswayed therewith, as women and children be. Secondly, that raging lust should not seize suddenly upon honest hearts, and such as fear God. Boaz was with her alone, yet doth he not in a filthy affection seek to dishonest her, as Judah did Tamar, being inflamed with lust at the sight of her; he did it on the day time, he asked not what she was, as Boaz doth here; lust would not afford him that leisure. This continency is praiseworthy in old Boaz, as it was before in young Joseph, Gen. xxxix.; a virtue as in these commended, so commanded by God, and much praised in some heathen, who may rise up in judgment against our wanton youth and some lecherous old men, whom God doth hate.

*And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid.* Thus Ruth calleth herself, shewing her humility, as before in chap. ii. 13, and here by professing what a one she would be unto him, humble and serviceable as an handmaiden, if she might obtain her suit. So said Abigail when David sent to her to take her to wife, 2 Sam. xxv. 41; and so humble and serviceable was Sarah, Gen. xviii. 6, for she called Abraham lord, and in what he commanded she readily obeyed. And so should good and virtuous wives do still, when husbands command but what is honest and just; not that wives should be counted in condition as servants, for as that is more than they will grant, so is it more than husbands of right ought to expect from them that be their yokefellows. But what maid-servants and handmaidens do of fear and servile duty, wives should do of love with cheerfulness, such offices as they ought to perform unto their husbands, who have authority to command. Therefore, let wives learn to obey, as God commandeth them to do in all things, Eph. v. 22, 33, and that with reverence, as unto the Lord, and as it is fit in the Lord, as the apostle teacheth, Col. iii. 18. And doubtless there would be more such than we find in these days, if they might have Abrahams to their husbands, loving, wise in instructing them, and giving them honour as the weaker vessels. Note farther, how this worthy woman doth humble and debase herself, for the godly think lowly and meanly of themselves, as did Abigail, also David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 14; that worthy centurion, who said that he was not worthy that Christ should come under his roof. Abraham likewise did call himself dust and ashes, Gen. xviii.; St Paul did greatly humble and vilify himself, 1 Tim. i. 13, 1 Cor. xv. 9; for the godly are not self-loving, they see and know what they be by nature; they are not like the angel of the church of Laodicea, which thought highly of himself, and that he wanted nothing, when yet he was poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable, Rev. iii. They know, if they have anything, that the same is from God; that the more they have, whether gifts of body, or mind, or of the world, or the graces of the soul, spiritual and heavenly, the more they be indebted, and the more they are to answer for. These things considered make them lowly in their own eyes, and to behave themselves so unto others, as all that fear God ought to do, and should go one before another in giving of honour, and not in taking it, as the world now doth.

*Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid.* In this phrase of speech she modestly claimeth marriage of him, for some do write that it was a custom when

they were contracted, that the man did throw over the woman the lap or wing of his garment, in token that he took her into his protection. The word is taken from fowls, which cover under their wings their young from danger. By which husbands are to learn that they either are or should be a protection to their wives, for the woman bestoweth herself upon the man, forsaking for his love father and mother, to be under his covert as his wife, Gen. xx. 16. She is then as himself, and he is to love her as being become one flesh; and as the head he is to care for her, as well as to rule and govern her. And therefore let husbands shew themselves to be such; and this shall they do, if they do give their wives countenance, and do grace them with all their credit; if they upon all just occasions stand for them, defend their persons, honesty, and credit against others; if they love, cherish, and nourish them as their own bodies, affording them all honest contentment, then are they good protectors. And if husbands be the wives' protection, and that they look to have them so, let them depend upon their husbands, let them keep close to them, and by a loving obedience procure protection thus from them; from which some husbands are so far as some wish them dead, and so in heart are murderers; some expose them to all misery by their unthriftiness; some run from them and leave them to the wide world; some offer them, or, at least bawd-like, are willing to have them give their bodies unto the lusts of others, that they may live thereby; others there be which murder them to be rid of them. All these are false and faithless husbands, breaking promise to their wives, made to them before God and his church; cursed caitiffs, running headlong to destruction, without honesty, love, or natural kindness to their own posterity.

*For thou art a near kinsman.* Here is the reason of her request grounded upon God's law, Deut. xxv., as she had learned by her mother-in-law. This is her only reason which she useth to Boaz, for that he was a good and a godly man, with whom the strongest argument to prevail is the word of God, for the word hath authority in godly men's hearts. It bindeth their consciences, and forceth them to yield; it commandeth them more than all other reasons besides. And therefore, in having to do with such, gather arguments soundly from the word of God, for these will work upon good men's hearts; and in using such reasons aright, the Lord, and not man, may be said to speak unto them; which course, though worldlings mock at, yet such as fear the Lord will weigh and consider of, for that they do desire to square and frame their whole life after the word and law of God.

Ver. 10. *And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than in the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.*

Boaz his reply unto Ruth, when he knew who she was, wherein he blesseth her, commendeth her, and giveth the reason of such his commendation of her.

*And he said.* His answer is full of kindness and love, neither doth he reprove her anything at all, though he justly might, for her thus coming in this manner; but Boaz, being a good man, considered rather the lawfulness of the matter which she came for, than of the manner of seeking it; then also her ground, and the reason moving her to come to him, which was the law of God. Thirdly, the estimation of her person, being held a virtuous woman generally of all. And lastly, his fulness of charity, which taketh things in the best part, and is not easily offended, made him not to reprove her; for a good man, full of mercy and love, doth not lightly condemn the virtuous for some shows of evil, for missing in the manner where the matter intended is good. For here the matter was lawful, the ground and inducement just, the person honest and generally well spoken of, and her intendment not ill. When these things concur, we are not to take exceptions against the manner, or failing in some light circumstance. Herein let us imitate good and godly Boaz, and let us not be like such rigid censurers as those be which condemn the best things, if they be not every way as they ought. Those also which make a small fault a great offence, rejecting the whole matter for the manner, the person for a little mistake. Oh, how would a proud and churlish Nabal have taken up this poor woman, a widow and a stranger, if she had come to him for marriage, especially if she had mistaken him, as Ruth here did Boaz in sort! What shame, what impudency would he have laid upon her, and so have rejected her! And those likewise which take things indifferent in ill part, as Hanun the king of the Ammonites did David's ambassadors, 2 Sam. x., which is greatly against charity, 1 Cor. xiii., and an argument of an envious, malicious, and proud nature, as may be seen in David's brethren against him, 1 Sam. xvii. 17, 18, 28, misinterpreting his coming, being sent by his father to them.

*Blessed be thou of the Lord.* These words shew how well he took her coming and request made touching marriage. He scorneth her not, he putteth her not off, but accepts her, as appeareth afterwards, and even in these words, when he saith to so poor a woman relieved by his alms, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord;' which words may be taken either as a petition or as an affirmation. If as a petition, that the Lord would bless her, then are the lessons the same with those in chap. ii. 20, where the same words are used by Naomi for him, as he doth here for Ruth, excepting this circumstance, that there Naomi, a poor woman, prayeth for the rich, and here the rich prayeth for the poor, of which also before in chap. ii. 12. If as an affirmation of that which he judgeth her to be, as if he had said, Blessed art thou of the Lord: thou art an happy and blessed woman, as in Luke i. 28, for in Hebrew the word *be* or *art* is not expressed, but only

thus, *Blessed thou of the Lord*, and so may be understood either *be*, to make it a petition, or *art*, to make it an affirmation, Luke i. 28, with xi. 28. And then we learn that the godly, though poor, are yet blessed; and so accounted of Boaz, that is, of a godly man, who can judge of true blessedness; for the godly have those things wherein true blessedness consisteth. As, first, God's favour in Christ, and through him are the children of his Father, therefore called blessed, Mat. xxv.; secondly, they have the fruits of the Spirit and the practice of virtue, and for this they be pronounced blessed, Ps. cxix. 1, 2, and cxxviii. 1: thirdly, they have the pardon of sin, and their sins put away in Christ, and shall not be imputed to them, and therefore are blessed, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; fourthly, they have the assurance of eternal life, which is promised only to such, and cannot be taken from them, John x. 27, 28, and therefore most blessed, though they want these outward things, as their master Jesus Christ himself did whilst he lived here on earth. Let this comfort the godly poor, and make them to rejoice more in their godliness than the worldlings in their earthly treasure, the carnal man in his pleasure, or the vain-glorious in his honour. This should make men esteem of the godly, as David did, Ps. ci., and as Abimelech did of Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 28; also to endeavour to be like them if we account them blessed, and to esteem their reproach for righteousness' sake, to be more honour than the glory of Pharaoh's court, as Moses did, Heb. xi.; to have them to dwell with us, to have our delight in them, as David had in the saints, Ps. ci., for they are blessed. And if so, then this confuteth the carnal conceit of worldlings, who think not so of them, especially if poor; yet let such consider our master Christ, how poor he was, also the afflicted state of the saints mentioned in Heb. xi. 37, yet pronounced to be such as the world was not worthy of. And lastly, how Joseph, a prince in Egypt, did rather choose to put his sons into Jacob's family, and to be called his children, than into Pharaoh's court, to be accounted mighty among the Egyptians.

*My daughter*, see chap. ii. 8. Thus he might call her, as being old; for the ancient are to be as fathers, and old women as mothers unto the younger sort, in teaching them good things by word and by example, Tit. ii. 1–3; so as a magistrate he might so speak to her, as Joshua spake to Achan, Joshua vii., for magistrates are to be as fathers to the people, and to tender them as their children. But of this before. Note how she called herself his handmaid; but he is pleased to term her by the name of daughter, though she so had debased and humbled herself; for the humbling of ourselves maketh our esteem to be nothing less, but rather greater, with such as be godly and wise, see chap. ii. 10–12, where the more Ruth did humble herself the more account did Boaz make of her; for such as humble themselves shall be exalted. Let none then think by humbling themselves that they shall lose credit and honour, as foolishly the base-born and new start-up doth imagine; for they cannot but be suspicious of contempt who know themselves unworthy of honour and esteem.

*For thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning.* This is the reason of his blessing of her, or accounting of her blessed, because she increased and did not decay in goodness. The truly virtuous and heartily religious are better at last than at the first, as the angel of the church of Thyatira, and as it is said of Ruth here in her kindness and love; for goodness, grace, and virtue, where it is truly planted, will increase rather than decay, for the Lord husbands such trees, John xv. 2. by his word, his Spirit, and afflictions. We must, therefore, labour for this commendation, 1 Thess. iv. 1, if we will be held truly virtuous, truly honest, kind, just, merciful, and gracious. But some are far from this praise, growing worse and worse, till they be stark naught, whether it be in respect of religion, as we see in Jehu, Demas, Alexander the coppersmith, and Judas, who were worst at last, because they were never truly good at the first; or in respect of love and kindness, as here spoken of Ruth, which love some turn into hatred, and kindness into cankered malice, and shew more ill-will at the last than love at the first, like Amnon to his sister Tamar, and Saul to David, for that love was neither good nor sound in them, as Jonathan's was to David, and Ruth's to Naomi, and hers to Ruth again.

*Inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich.* Boaz in the other words gave a reason of his blessing of her; here he giveth a reason of his so commending her kindness, which appeareth to be more at the last now than at the first, to wit, to her husband deceased, and now to her mother-in-law Naomi, because she married him in her own country, and him rather than any of her own nation, which was kindness. Then for Naomi her sake to leave her own country, and to come and dwell with her in Judah in a poor estate, this was great kindness; but now to be ruled by Naomi, being so young a woman, to seek to match with an old man, and not to follow nature in desiring young men, but the law of God, for to raise up a name again unto her dead husband, whom by this means she maketh to live again in Israel, this is it which maketh her kindness to be more at last than at the first, in loving an old man rather than any young, and him also for the dead's sake, to revive his name among the people of God. See here in Ruth how true love, obedience to counsel, and grace, do overcome nature and the law of lust; for she loved her husband, she was obedient to Naomi, and in herself virtuous, and therefore reason and religion did take place, and neither nature nor lust prevailed with her. A good example for youth to follow. Note out of these words farther these lessons: first, that as

now, so then, and ever before, there have been two sorts, rich and poor, in the world; first, to shew in one what all might have been, and in the other, the poor, what all deserve to be; secondly, that the rich may have occasion to shew works of mercy, and the poor, labouring painfully and honestly, may have to whom to go unto for relief; for the rich are God's stewards for the poor. Let both seek to live together lovingly, and to help one another; the poor to lend their labour to the rich, and the rich to supply their wants; for the one cannot live without the other; all cannot be rich, neither must all be poor. Let us rest contented with our estates; let not the poor murmur with envy at the rich, neither let these despise the poor; for God hath made them both, and one to stand in need of the other. Secondly, that young persons in nature affect to marry with young persons like themselves, which is implied by Boaz's speech. So did Isaac marry, and Jacob, and so in ancient time were matches made. If ever old and young married together, it was the old man with a young woman, but never an old woman with a young man, as the wanton and lecherous often do with wanton young fellows in these days, to the stain of their sex and reproach to themselves, and often their utter undoing; for youth cannot affect old age, and therefore it is fittest that marriage be made between such as may most likely agree together; other matches prove for the most part untoward. Thirdly, the truly religious will be ruled by the law of God, and will not be led after their natural disposition. For here Ruth leaveth the young men and taketh an old man, because the law so bound her, as she conceived, taking Boaz for the nearest kinsman; because such as be truly religious have denied themselves, and do resign themselves wholly to God's good pleasure and will, saying, as Christ said, Mat. xxvi. 39, 'Not my will, O Father, but thy will be done.' Hence it was that Joseph did abstain from his mistress, David from smiting Saul, when twice he might have done it, to get the kingdom; he rather would wait and endure much affliction, for 'he that believeth,' saith Isaiah, 'maketh not haste.' And hence is it that such as fear God dare not follow the course of the world, but do restrain their nature, and their desires, and do endeavour to please God in all things. If this be the grace of the religious, let men hereby try themselves, and be as God wisheth them to be, Deut. v. 29, and as religion and grace itself requireth them to be, as David promised and prayed to be, Ps. lxxxvi. 11 and cxix. 5. They are surely, then, far from being religious, which live according to their lusts, James i. 27; those that will follow the world, Tit. ii. 11, 12, with Demas and Judas and Nabal, but not forsake it, as Barnabas, Acts iv. 37, and Zaccheus, Luke xix., did; those that will follow the flesh, as the young men did their eyes in the old world, Gen. vi., and as Potiphar's wife, who was enamoured with fair Joseph: few Josephs among the vainly and idly up-bred youths of the gentry in our days. And yet such will hunt after honours and vain titles, and if they cannot merit them they will pay money for them; the insolency and pride of Haman, the aspiring arrogancy of Absalom and Adonijah, are reigning in many. And have we not scribes and pharisees which love the highest places? Is there a Jonathan among thousands? Where is a Moses that will be no more a courtier for fear of sinning? Heb. xi. Will a Saul become a Paul so well trained up? or can there be found a Manaen, Acts xiii. 1, a prince's foster-brother, to join to the church, and to become a teacher, in mere love to religion? Do they not rather scorn the calling? And yet to call these worldlings, these fleshly livers, and these vain-glorious spirits profane, irreligious, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, oh how would they take on! how enraged would they be! So they love to be held religious, or not to be without religion, and yet in works deny God, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate, as the apostle speaketh, Titus i. 16.

Ver 11. *And now, my daughter, fear not: I will do to thee all thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.*

Boaz gave her before due commendation; here is now his consolation and comforting of her; first, by a dehortation, willing her not to fear, then by a faithful promise to satisfy her request, yielding a reason of the same.

*And now, my daughter.* Boaz still useth this term, both for that he loved her and desired to comfort her. We may here see in Boaz, that a loving and merciful heart is not rough in terms, as an unloving and merciless Nabal is. This we may see to be so between loving parents and children, in Abraham and Isaac, Gen. xxii. 7, 8; between kind married couples, as in Isaac and Rebekah, Elkanah and Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 8; and between loving friends and godly disposed, as in Elizabeth and Mary, Luke i. 43, St Paul, and other Christians, or labourers with him in the gospel, and also in Eli and Samuel; for loving natures, whether they be high and honourable, speaking to mean persons, as Boaz to Ruth here, or old and in authority, to such as be young, as Eli to Samuel, 1 Sam. iii. 16, or such as sit in judgment speaking to malefactors, as Joshua to Achan, Joshua vii. 19, or a master unto his servants, as Job to his, Job xxxi. 13, or one giving an alms to the poor, as Boaz to Ruth, chap. iii. 8; it is all one, they are not rough nor churlish, for they be neither proud nor impatient. And therefore, if we would be held loving and merciful, let us use loving and kind speeches. Note again, that loving and kind speeches of great and rich persons are comfortable unto the poor, as Ruth before confesseth, chap. ii. 13; and therefore Boaz doth here use them to cheer up the spirit of this poor woman; for kind words witness a kind heart, if the speakers be not dissemblers. Now, the apprehension of hearty love in the mighty gladdeneth much the heart of such as be poor and in a low estate;

let, therefore, the mighty and rich learn to shew forth kindness, and to speak lovingly. By it, David, so speaking to Amasa, passing by his fault with Absalom, bowed the heart of the tribe of Judah as one man, 2 Sam. xix. 13, 14. How did Absalom win the hearts of the people? Was it not by loving speeches and courteous behaviour, which be of an attractive virtue to gain men's affections? How singularly beloved was our late queen Elizabeth of most blessed memory, for this virtue, of all her true subjects, in that she was so affable and full of loving speeches, and of a gracious carriage towards them! The contrary we may see in Rehoboam, who, by rough and contemptible* speeches, alienated the hearts of ten tribes from him for ever. The mighty, therefore, shall do wisely to speak with mildness, to use terms of love and respect, whereby they shall procure love, reputation, and due honour unto themselves.

*Fear not.* That is, fear not to be deceived of thy hope, though thou be poor and I rich, let no such thought trouble thee, that I should therefore make light account of thee; for I am well disposed in my affection to thee, therefore fear not. Thus Boaz speaketh unto Ruth; for he knew, and so do we, that it is a common thing to fear the issue, where earnest desire is to obtain the thing, especially where it may in some respects seem unlikely to come to pass, as Ruth might here so conceive, when she should consider what they two were, and the great difference between them. For in such a case there cannot be a full persuasion of the event; the poorer and meaner party may justly fear contempt, and usually such a one feareth the alterability of man's nature, though haply good words may pass between them for the present. And therefore in such a case it is good and fitting for the party of whom kindness is expected, to give to the other some tokens of assurance not to doubt nor fear, as Boaz doth in this place, and in the words following.

*I will do thee all that thou requirest.* By this Boaz taketh away her fear and doubt, in that he promiseth her marriage. For, where a godly and honest man maketh a promise, there is no fear of performance; because he maketh conscience of his words, and knoweth himself in equity bound to the performance of the same. And therefore may we rest upon an honest man's word, though in these days many would be held honest which make no conscience of breach of promise. In that Boaz here maketh her a promise of marriage, and so contracteth himself unto her, but yet *de futuro*, as it is said, and conditionally, as the two next verses shew, we may note, that it is lawful to betroth and contract ourselves one to another before marriage. It was an usual thing among God's people in former times, Exod. xxi. 9, Deut. xx. 7, Mat. i. 18; which betrothing is either lawful or unlawful: lawful, which is made by parties that may lawfully marry, which be free in their choice, of years of discretion to make their choice; and therefore contracts made of such as be within degrees forbidden, of contrary religions, betrothed already to others, or defective in nature, or wanting judgment what they do, or being under government of parents and not free, are not to be allowed. Now further, this lawful contracting is either conditional or absolute, and the same *de præsenti* or *de futuro*, I *take* thee, or I *will take* thee to be my wife. If conditional, then it bindeth no farther than the observing of the condition bindeth; for if that be not kept, the parties be free, unless they give their bodies in the mean space one to another. If it be absolutely made, and by such as may so contract themselves, they be man and wife before God, and may not be sundered one from another. These things are to be therefore considered of in contracts used before marriage, for the parties' better settling of their affections one upon another, for the better acquainting themselves with the conditions and qualities of each other, and to fit themselves for house-keeping and more convenient living together, having made some honest provision beforehand.

*For all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.* The reason why he yieldeth to take her to wife; her portion was her virtues, for which she was generally commended of all. This reason did the more confirm her, and easily removed away fear, when she might perceive upon what ground he was induced to marry with her. Hence may arise many lessons: first, that virtue maketh even the poor and strangers too to become famous, as may appear in this poor widow, a Moabitish woman. So it made David famous in the days of Saul, though he sought to obscure his name; and likewise Barnabas in the primitive church; for virtue will not be hid, neither can it. And therefore such as desire renown, labour for virtue. Is not Abigail famous for her wisdom? Joseph for his chastity? Moses for his meekness? Samuel for his justice? David for his zeal? Ehud, Gideon, and Jephthah for their fortitude? and so the seven and thirty worthies of David for their valiant acts? Esther for her humility? the sinful woman for her penitency? the sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, for their temperance? This is the way, and the best way, to get fame and true honour for ever; and yet few tread aright in this path, but rather they will make themselves so notorious by villany, that all may know them to be vicious persons, without shame, without blushing, like those which Isaiah, chap. iii. 9, and Jeremiah, chap. vi. 15, speak of, which would not hide their sins, neither be ashamed for them. Secondy, that the godly and virtuous will take notice of such as be virtuous among them. For so do here all the people of Bethlehem, the people of God; because they love virtue, having it in themselves, they desire to encourage others that be so, and rejoice therein, and therefore do they speak thereof, and spread abroad the name of it, to make the parties which be virtuous to

* That is, 'contemptuous.'—ED.

be honoured. This is comfort to such as live well; though they do not, nor may thereby seek praises, yet shall they be taken notice of. And by this may men consider of themselves whether they be virtuous, if they will take notice of graces in others, and rejoicingly speak thereof, to the honour and praise of the virtuous. Thirdly, that a godly man will take a wife for her virtues, as Boaz doth here Ruth; so did David for her virtues choose Abigail: for a virtuous woman is lovely, and her price, as Solomon saith, 'is far above the rubies; the heart of her husband may safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil,' Prov. xxxi. 10, 11. Let men therefore in marrying, make this choice; for such a woman is a crown to her husband, Prov xii. 4, and she retaineth honour, Prov. xi. 16. And yet this is the least reckoned of in these days; but now beauty, wealth, honour, and friends, are the motives to make marriages. Fourthly, that a good report for virtue in a woman, is a good portion, and a means of preferment. Thus came poor Ruth to so honourable and rich an husband, having neither wealth nor friends. For such a woman hath the best and most durable help of true love, even virtue; she hath the Lord to speak for her, and to procure her favour, and to cause her to be beloved. This should make women to strive for virtue, and to get a good name from it, and not for beauty and brave attire; for a good name is better than riches—than precious ointment, Eccles. vii. 1, and rather to be chosen than great riches, Prov. xxii. 1. Let parents hence learn to bring up their daughters virtuously, it is a good portion and means of preferment. This may comfort poor maidens which be virtuous, and want friends and goods, by a good report yet may they match well; let them strive, therefore, though they want goods, yet to get grace and good conditions, as piety and religion in heart, and modesty in countenance, apparel, and gesture; let them preserve chastity, and not be given to youthful company; let them be skilful in good housewifery, painful also and industrious, and having power to govern the tongue. If thus they be beautified and enriched, they have a better portion than many pounds, and fair enough to the wise in heart, so as they will give a good man contentment; for beauty is fading, and favour deceitful and vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, shall be praised, Prov. xxxi. 30.

Ver. 12. *And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman; howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.*

Boaz his information of Ruth, wherein she was somewhat mistaken, granting the truth that he was a near kinsman, but not the nearest; so as here he preventeth her apprehension of the promise made, for taking it absolutely, but conditionally, as in the next verse, more at large he declareth his mind. So that here is a concession of that which she had spoken of him in ver. 9, and withal an instruction touching another nearer than himself, which she knew not of.

*And now it is true.* Boaz will not deny a truth, for a godly man is a lover of the truth, and will yield to it when he heareth it; for it swayeth with him, which, if it so did with every one, it would prevent tedious disputes and contentions among the learned; prevent long suits of law, put lawyers to silence in corrupt pleading, and save many pounds contentiously misspent; prevent deceit in buying and selling, and many other mischiefs, which miserably fall out for want of acknowledging the truth, which men should and would do if they hated falsehood and lying, if they had a hearty love of the truth, if they would cast off pride and the desire of vain praises, and covetousness, and the greedy desire of gain; for these hinder the truth, and where these reign, hardly will truth be acknowledged as it ought, or reign among men as it should.

*That I am thy near kinsman.* Four things might move him thus ingeniously to confess himself so nigh a kinsman to those poor women. First, his love to the truth, so to speak as the thing was; secondly, his holy and religious respect unto the law of God, by authority whereof she made claim to him; thirdly, his humility and uprightness of heart, not disdaining his godly poor kindred; fourthly, her own virtues, and his love which he bare to her for the same. (Of rich and poor kinsfolks I have spoken before in chap. ii. 20.) Here observe, that a loving, godly, humble, and upright-hearted rich man will readily confess himself of near kindred to his poor kinsfolk if they be virtuous; for virtue maketh them honourable with the virtuous, though poverty make them contemptible to the world. And therefore, for the poor to get an acknowledgment of them from their rich kindred, let them be virtuous, that whereas they want goods, grace may procure them favour and respect; for poor and lewd are not worthy the acknowledging, being contemptible both in body and soul.

*Howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.* So that the nighest to a right are first to be preferred thereto. This is here implied, and this reason and equity will yield. Therefore Boaz honestly maketh here mention of this other kinsman, to whom Ruth should first have gone; for both Naomi and she were mistaken in this, to come first to Boaz for the right of marrying her. Yet see how courteously and lovingly he answereth her, teaching, that such as demand in simple ignorance a matter at our hands as due, and yet in some sort not so, we are meekly to inform them, and not scornfully to reject them, as great ones now will do; for a simple error is pardonable, and it is a fruit of goodness to inform them in the right; and this would prevent contention and strife, which otherwise might grow thereupon for want of better information. Let this, then, reprove those which gladly take occasion from such mistakes to laugh at and jest away the parties, making themselves very merry with the parties' simplicity, though their meaning be both good and honest.

Ver. 13. *Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning.*

Boaz his confirmation of his promise before concerning his marrying of Ruth, wherein is noted the time when he will go about it, upon what condition he will do it, the confirmation itself by solemn oath, and his advice to rest for that night till the morning.

*Tarry this night.* Boaz deferreth to perform the kinsman's part for a space, though very short; and seeing it was night, and now dangerous for her to go alone from thence, he adviseth her to tarry there that night in the floor. Note, first, that upon reasonable cause, that may be deferred which cannot absolutely be denied to be done, which may be of use to check the impatience of delay, when there may be good reason and just cause of delaying the matter; secondly, that a true and loving friend careth for the safety of such as he loveth. Thus Lot took care for his guests, Michal for David's escaping from the hand of Saul; so Jonathan in this respect shewed his care and love to David, and Hushai his friend likewise. So did the disciples care for Paul's safety, Acts ix.; for true love is not only to do favours, but to expel injuries, and to prevent dangers from friends, which reproveth the ill friendship of men in these days; for some will see their friends running into evil, yet will not care by good counsel to prevent it, much less, being in trouble, to seek their deliverance, if it should haply prove either troublesome or costly; for neither of these will these counterfeit friends bestow upon those they pretend to love, when they stand in need of them. Some are worse, even Judas-like, who for gain will betray their friend, or play Ahithophel's part, turn his counsel against him for hope of favour, when he thinks his friend down the wind, and another like to rise. Such false and faithless hearts may now be found more than enow, who also will expose their friend into any danger or loss, so they may get or save thereby. Let men therefore learn soundly to try, before they too hastily trust, the pretended, rather than truly intended, love in these days; for now is falsehood in friendship, for that commonly every man loveth another for himself only, as experience sheweth; for otherwise true friends will be as Jonathan, who valued nothing of a kingdom for his friend David's sake; they will be like Hushai in advising for David's welfare; as Barzillai in relieving him in distress, and in shewing him kindness when most were against him; as Abishai in exposing himself into imminent danger for his safety. What friends can be found like the heathen mariners to Jonah, who in a tempest strove with all their powers to save him, with danger of all their lives? or like the nurse of Mauritius, the emperor's child, who offered her own to be slain by that bloody Phocas, to preserve her foster child's life, the son of the emperor? Rare examples worthy imitation, but not to be paralleled in these days. But to return to Boaz, it may be asked, Why he would suffer her to be with him alone in the floor all night? I answer, his care of her safety; for he would rather admit of an inconvenience to himself than the danger of a mischief to her, knowing the wickedness of the times then. Again, it may be he felt in himself strength, by God's grace, and also a resolution to withstand the temptation, because he was a man of years (though yet some old are wanton enough); because he was a just man (as it is said of Joseph, the husband of Mary, Mat. i.), and would preserve right to his neighbour. And thirdly, for that he had an honest and true intent to marry her, if so he might, and therefore he would not offer her dishonesty; though many of unbridled affections make such opportunities ready motives to themselves of abasing themselves one with another, because (forsooth) they mind to marry. Of which evil in this book elsewhere I have spoken. See ver. 14.

*And it shall be in the morning.* So Boaz, though he deferred it, yet it was but a very little while; he would not long, as Naomi saith after, ver. 18, delay the matter; for a wise man will not be over hasty, yet will he not neglect, but hasten the business which he taketh in hand. For the one is the property of a fool, but the other of a man of understanding, Prov. xiv. 15, if so be the matter do require haste; for there be two extremes in businesses to be avoided: the one is too great haste, where need is not, and this is rashness, punished in good Josias, 2 Chron. xxxv. 22, and in the heady Israelites, Numb. xiv. 40; the other is too great remissness and slackness when the matter requireth haste, which was Amasa his fault, 2 Sam. xx. 5. And therefore the matter is to be considered of, and thereby we may judge when to make haste, and when to take more time and deliberation; for that is not rashly attempted which is first undertaken with good advice, though with speed executed; secondly, done seasonably, as the circumstances of the time, place, and persons require; thirdly, when it is done by our calling warrantably. When a man faileth in these, though he take time enough, he is but a rash adventurer.

*That if he will perform to thee the part of a kinsman.* That is, if he will marry thee, and raise up the name of the dead; for he is before me by right to take or refuse thee, so as if he will have thee, thou canst not refuse him, then take him, and so an end hereof between us. Though it appeareth many ways that Boaz had an earnest affection to Ruth, yet would he not wrong the kinsman if he would have her; for a good and a just man, even in what he desires, will not wrong another, because the law of righteousness bindeth him to just dealing, Jer. xxii. 3, of which he maketh conscience. So requireth the law of love which

possesseth his heart, which is, to love another as himself, Mat. xxii. 37, and to do as he would be done unto, Mat. vii. 12. And thus should every man learn to do, and not to withhold any good from the owner thereof, and to whom it is due, Prov. iii. 27. In this kind, owe nothing to any man, neither wrong any; for 'God is an avenger of all such things,' 1 Thes. iv. 6. Here then come justly to be reproved such as make no conscience of wronging others. Of which sort are all these: first, thieves and robbers, against which the prophet, Zech. v., and apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 10, speaketh. Secondly, partakers with such, by counsel, command, consent, provoking, flattery, concealing, receiving, defending, or (if it be in our power) by not punishing such; for such be wicked persons, and such do hate their own souls, Ps. l. 18. Thirdly, fraudulent persons, 1 Thes. iv. 6, of which there be these: first, such as pretend law to do wrong, Lev. xix. 13, and xxv. 27, as the judge in giving wrong sentence for by-respects, who by the prophet are called thieves, Isa. i. 23. So lawyers, in crafty pleading to overthrow justice and innocency, the sheriffs in panelling partial juries to pleasure men, and all such as be false witnesses, or procure their unjust cause to pass by giving bribes. To these may be added deceitful buyers and sellers, in praising or dispraising overmuch for advantage, Prov. xx. 14, in counterfeit wares, in false weights and measures, Deut. xxv. 13, 16. So likewise those villains, counterfeit bankrupts, damnable thieves, coin-catchers, cheating gamesters, and gnathonical knaves, who soothe and flatter to gain by others' simplicity and folly. Fourthly and lastly, such as withhold goods from the owners, and will not make restitution, as in conscience they are bound, Lev. vi. 1; for so God commandeth and promiseth mercy to them that restore, Ezek. xviii. 7, and threateneth the punishment for not restoring, ver. 12. It is a rule of equity and justice that requireth it, which is, to give every one his own, and the law of nature, to do as we would be done unto. Yea, we have the practice of the godly to move us. The sons of Jacob, Gen. xliii. 21, Zaccheus, Luke xix. 8, and Samuel offer it, 1 Sam. xii. 3, if they had done wrong to any. Lastly, this is the judgment of the godly learned,* that restitution should be made, affirming the sin not to be remitted except the thing taken away be restored, and also that repentance is not found without it, if there be ability to restore. Neither may this be deferred when it is in our hand, Prov. iii. 28, and when we come to worship before God, Mat. v. 23. But we must restore the thing found, borrowed, or otherwise gotten, and not justly being our own, unto the true owner himself, if we know him, or to his children, executors, or next kinsman, Lev. vi. 5, and if these be not to be found, then to God, for some public use to the church or relief of the poor.* And this restitution must be made by me for every wrong done to my brother in body, either by myself or by my beast; in his goods in like manner, by stealing, by eating their ground with my beasts, by burning, by borrowing and not repaying, by withholding what was delivered to be kept of fidelity, by hiding cattle going astray, or keeping things found. Herein also may justly be reckoned sacrilege, robbing of churches or churchmen of their maintenance, allowed by God and the good laws of our land, by not tithing, or tithing deceitfully.† The labourer is worthy of his hire; let him enjoy such maintenance as by law is given him, and godly ancestors truly intended him. And be not guilty of this spiritual theft, which the very heathen would not do to their priests; for in the great famine of Egypt, all the Egyptians' lands and goods were bought and sold, but the lands of the priests were not, but they did eat the portion which Pharaoh gave them, Gen. xlvii. 22; but with us, men are of so greedy, and more than heathenish appetite, that they can devour up both land, and living, and tithing, the whole portion of Christ's ministers; so as these heathen shall rise up in judgment against these devourers, which eat up from the Lord's messengers what hath been dedicated for the maintenance of his service and worship.

*Well, let him do the kinsman's part.* That is, I yield him his right in thee, because he is before me, as I have said, neither will I take thee except he renounce his right in thee. Boaz, we see, seeketh not to gain her to himself without consent, neither will abuse her, but honestly behaveth himself in the night with her alone, as in the eyes of men, and open view of the world. For a godly man is not good because of men, but for that he feareth God which looketh upon him, and upon whom he looketh; and therefore everywhere behaveth himself as he ought. Boaz here loveth her, but lusts not after her to defile her, as some would, making it a sport to commit fornication, with those whom they think do belong unto others, either betrothed maids or married wives; but 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,' Heb. xiii. 4.

*But if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee.* These words Boaz uttereth as the ground of his promise to marry with Ruth, to wit, if he the kinsman refuse her; for when one renounceth his right, it is then for another; for the release made is a setting free of that which before was tied, which is for direction to such as take houses or grounds. It is a common complaint to say, He hath taken my house and my grounds from me; but often unjustly, as when the lord letteth not lands or houses, but to a limited time, which being expired, the same is free to let to

* St Aug. *in Epi. ad Mac.* Danæus *in Eth.* lib. ii. cap. xv. Perkins in the *Pract. of Rep.*

* Joseph. *Antiq.* lib. iv. cap. viii.

† Numb. v. 7, 8; read Exod. xxi. 19, 29, 30: Lev. xxiv. 19; Exod. xxi. 33, 34, 36, and xxii. 1; 2 Sam. xii. 6; Deut. xxii. 2; Exod. xxii. 5, 6, 14; Ps. xxxvii. 21; 2 Kings vi. 5; Lev. vi. 4; Deut. xxii. 2, 3; Lev. v. 16; Deut. xiv. 22; Prov. xx. 25; Lev. xxvii. 33; Mal. i. 8, 13, 14.

another, except either custom bind to let the present possessor to have the refusal, or that some promise be made, which bindeth an honest man to keep it. Besides this, there is indeed a friendly courtesy in the landlord to offer to the present enjoyer that which he hath, before any other; but he is not simply bound so to do, but only of good will. Yet must I needs acknowledge that it is not a neighbourly part for any one, out of a greedy covetousness, to undermine the possessor, or by any indirect means to procure from him, at the landlord's hands, his house or lands. For this is against the law of love, to do as we would be done unto, and not to do to others what we would not that they should do unto us, as the law and prophets teach, and our master Christ commandeth; and yet this is a common practice now for want of love. Note again how wary Boaz is in making her a promise to marry with her; it is done cautelously, with condition of upright dealing between him and another. For as every promise is to be made of an honest man with due consideration (because once made, it bindeth, except there be a release) so especially the promise of marrying one another, both for the weightiness of the matter (nothing being so much concerning the welfare, or downfall of man in this life), as also for the indissolubleness of the knot; for here is no releasing one of another, but they must live together till death. And therefore let us learn to be wary in making this match; and to do this, first, consider these two things before mentioned, and weigh them well, to prevent haste and rashness herein; secondly, how fit or unfit the marriage is, and what good reasons there be to persuade to it, or dissuade it; thirdly, what is required before the marriage to further it, or else which might hinder the same. We may not rashly and unadvisedly run into this holy ordinance, as many do, first, upon foolish, light, and unadvised love; secondly, upon strong and unbridled lust, violently pressing them to sudden contracts, and often to filthy uncleanness, like brute beasts which have no understanding; thirdly, upon a fear to lose the opportunity of enjoying one another, if friends should know it, they will contract themselves and give themselves one to another, and that dishonestly, to force friends to consent; fourthly, covetousness, when men are carried away, not with the love of the party, but the greatness of a portion. These, and such like, make hasty matches, at leisure to be repented of. Here it may be demanded, Why Boaz made an *if* of the other kinsman's mind and good will, seeing first he was the nighest kinsman, and had secondly, the law of God to move him thereto? Was it not uncharitableness? I answer, No; for he knew not his kinsman's mind, as it appeareth by his trial of him the next day. Again, he knew well, that albeit nature and religion tie men to do a thing, yet worldlings will not do their duty. Cain had nature, reason, and religion, to love his brother Abel; so had Saul to respect David; but these prevailed with neither of them, no more than the law here was of force to move this worldling; for such a one he was, as shall be shewed in the next chapter.

*Then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee.* Boaz having laid down the condition, he reneweth his promise made in ver. 11; yea, though the other refuse her, he will take her; for one man's dislike maketh not true love to decay in another man's heart; for true love is fixed upon the thing beloved, without respect to other men's affections to the same; their liking may the more increase love, but dislike cannot utterly remove it, where it is firmly settled. This experience telleth us to be true, in the love of young persons affecting marriage. And it were to be wished that our love were so strong, that our souls were so glued to religion, that though others dislike, we may not therefore cease to love it, but be as Ruth to Naomi, chap. i. 16; and so say, as she to her, though she saw Orpah depart from her. Note again that albeit Boaz made this promise to her alone, and without other witnesses, but God only; yet having promised, and sworn to keep it, he after honestly and faithfully performs the same; as in the next chapter is plain. For an honest man will keep his oath and his word, as may be seen in the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, Numb. xxxii. 27, Josh. iv. 12, and xxii. 3; in Jonathan and David, in Judah with Simeon, Judges i. 3, 7, xii. 13; in Joseph to his brethren after Jacob's death, Gen. l. 21; Caleb to Othniel, Josh. vi. 23; the spies to Rahab, Judges i. 25; and to the man of Bethel. For an honest man hath a binding conscience when the word is passed out of his mouth, he careth for his honest name and credit, which to him is more than riches, and better than ointment. If therefore we be of upright and honest dealing, and so would be accounted, let us keep our words and our oaths; for this is common honesty, justice, and a thing of good report, which we are commanded to have care of, Philip. iv. 8. It is a mark of a good Christian, though it be to our own hindrance, Ps. xv. 4; we shall be like the children of our heavenly Father, who faileth not of anything which he speaketh, Josh. xxi. 45, 1 Kings viii. 56. Without keeping promise, men cannot be trusted; it cutteth off all commerce and traffic with men. Godly men have ever made conscience of their word; and very heathen men have been worthy of admiration in this point. And yet these things move nothing a number of base-minded, falsehearted, and dishonest Christians, unworthy the name of such, when they lose their common honesty.

*As the Lord liveth.* This is an oath, Jer. iv. 2. This oath he taketh, because it was a mattter of great importance, and for that he would put the poor woman out of all doubt, and that she should not fear the accomplishment, though he was rich and she poor, he noble, she mean; he an Israelite, and she a stranger of Moab. From this note: First, that it is lawful to

take an oath, against the anabaptists' assertion, of which see chap. i. 17; secondly, that the godly use to swear by God when they swear, and by none other. Of this more at large also in chap. i. 17. Thirdly, that the form of an oath is diversely expressed, and not one manner of way; as thus, 'I speak it before God;' 'God is my witness;' 'The Lord knoweth;' 'As the Lord liveth;' 'I protest before the Lord;' 'I call God to record,' and divers such like, besides the common form, 'by God,' and so forth; which I note to tax the usual swearing of many, who seem to hate swearing in the common form, and yet they themselves swear too often in another form: so subtle is Satan to beguile them in that, and therein to make them guilty of that, from which they take themselves to be most free. But they be deceived; for when God or his name and attributes are at any time mentioned, for this end to confirm the truth of that which a man speaketh, it is an oath. Let men take notice hereof, and cease to be common swearers. Fourthly, that it is lawful to swear in private cases, as Jonathan did to David, and he to Jonathan, the spies to Rahab, and Boaz here to Ruth, in case of necessity and in weighty matters. In such cases we may use our lawful liberty, but yet with great wariness, with great reverence of the high majesty of God; not suddenly, not in passion, not without due advisement. Fifthly, that an oath is the confirming of the mind of another in the truth of that which is spoken, Heb. vi. 16; whether of things past, spoken, or done, or of things present, or of things to come, and promised to be done. This is the end of Boaz's swearing here. If this be so, then let men rest satisfied with an oath, as Ruth doth here, and as in some cases God would have men so to do, Exod. xxii. 11; for it is the greatest confirmation of a truth that may be, except the party swearing either hath been convinced, or is at that present convincible, by good probabilities, of falsehood. If this be the end of an oath, then also let men care to swear truly, that the mind of others may trust them, and rely upon their faithful oath taken. But we have cause to bewail these times, in which there be such, as professing Christianity, yet will use oaths, yea, and fearful execrations to cozen with, to make their lies and secret villanies intended to be the less suspected, as by miserable experience some simple and plain meaning men may speak, being deluded by fair shows of godliness, zeal of goodness, words confirmed by oaths, fearful execrations and counterfeit letters, that wicked hypocrites and Satanical deceivers might attain to their unlawful desires. Let men therefore take heed of men, and beware whom they trust, seeing men dare with pretence of godliness go so far in detestable villanies; but I wish him or them that practise it, to leave it betimes, else let them look for deserved doom, without serious repentance

*Lie down until the morning.* With these words he endeth his conference, not spending the night in vain or unnecessary prattling, as idle lovers and wanton suitors will do, but having answered her request, and shewed to her his love and honest resolution, he willeth her to lie down until the morning. By which words it seemeth she was risen up, as ready to depart, but that he would not permit her so to do, for the reasons before mentioned, and because the night is ordained for rest, as the psalmist saith, 'At night man goeth to his rest.' Neither is it safe for young women to be abroad in the night; it savoureth not well, it befitteth not their sex, and may endanger their chastity. We must beware of being night-walkers, for Satan, the prince of darkness, will then be the most busy. Such also as hate the light love to be in darkness, as the thief and the adulterer, Job xxiv. 15. Again, the night emboldeneth to all villany and wickedness, which in the day time they will not dare to do, as may be seen in the Sodomites, Gen. xix., and Gibeonites, Judges xix. 22, 25. Lastly, night-walkers have ever been suspected for ill-disposed persons.

Ver. 14. *And she lay at his feet until the morning; and she rose up before one could know another; for he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.*

This verse sheweth how Ruth rested till the morning; then, her rising ready to depart, with the moving cause from Boaz's speech, being a wary caveat unto her.

*And she lay at his feet until the morning.* This is added to shew their chaste and continent behaviour; for if they had offended, the Holy Ghost, who spared not Noah's drunkennes, Lot's incest, David's adultery, would not have concealed this fact, if so they had thereof been guilty. They were both honest and feared God, and therefore they would not commit such wickedness, albeit they had occasion offered. Whereby we may learn that where the fear of God and honesty beareth sway, there chastity may be preserved, though occasion be offered to the contrary. Behold this here in old Boaz, and elsewhere in young Joseph; there was neither lechery in the one, nor strength of lust, nor youthful wantonness in the other; for their lust is bridled where the fear of God possesseth the heart, and honesty lodgeth. To be kept therefore from this evil, let these virtuous examples guide us, that lust overbear us not, as it doth in such as seek occasion to sin in this kind; 'neighing,' as Jeremiah speaketh, 'after their neighbours' wives.' And such also, though they seek not occasion, like the former, yet they easily take occasion to offend this way, with virgins, with married wives, and with those whom they think to marry with; and this last is held no offence at all by them, because they think that marriage amendeth all. But, first, it is an argument of a strong and unbridled lust, which should not bear rule in Christians. Secondly, if the man hap to die before marriage (as who is cer-

tain of life ?), the woman being with child becometh infamous, and she that should have been a wife is left as an harlot. Thirdly, it is an offence to the church, being known, and punishable by the same; which offence the godly must avoid: 'Give no offence,' saith the apostle, 'to Jew, nor Gentile, nor to the church of God,' 1 Cor. x. 32. Fourthly, and lastly, it beseemeth not the holiness of the public solemnization of marriage, to which the parties should come undefiled, as the assembly and congregation of God doth in charity judge of them. Note besides, that these two godly persons kept themselves chaste, and how others accounted also godly, and that so were, yet were very foully overtaken in this sin of the flesh, as we have example in Lot in a cave with his daughters, Judah with Tamar, and David with Bathsheba. From whence observe, that God's own dear children have not all the like measure of grace, nor power to resist temptations, and to subdue their own corruptions. In the holy word of God, we shall find three sorts of the godly; some hardly found fault with, their infirmities passed over with silence; such a one was Isaac, Boaz here; so Joshua, Samuel, Daniel, Mephibosheth, Jonathan, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, the Virgin Mary, and others. Some are noted with their frailties and light infirmities, being most excellent saints of God, as Moses, Job, Jeremiah, Hezekiah, and Josiah, and some others. A third sort are stained with foul offences, as David with adultery and murder, Judah with incest, and so Lot; Aaron with idolatry, and Peter with perjury; for the Lord affordeth not the like grace in equal measure unto all. All are sanctified, yet corruptions more sway in one than in another, as these instances shew, and as experience daily teacheth. Therefore let us not think to find the like grace in all, and the like mortification of corruption; for God distributeth his gifts, and the measure, as it pleaseth him. None are then to be condemned simply for bad persons, as if they were not in the number of God's saints, because they be not in all things like their brethren; for they, even both sorts of them, may be the Lord's, and yet in something be very much unlike. Joseph, enticed by his mistress, preserves his chastity; but David enticed another man's wife, and lay with her. Boaz alone with Ruth would not sin in fornication; but Lot alone with his daughters committed incest. Nathanael was a true Israelite without guile; but Jacob, first called Israel, of whom came all the Israelites, dissembled, and lied to his own father; Moses, a meek man, but Jonah of a very froward spirit; and yet all of them good men, and the blessed saints of God. This therefore justly reproveth those who, seeing men professing religion, and yet to differ in their courses, some to live unreproveably, and others to give great offence in their falls, though of infirmity, do utterly condemn them all as hypocrites, and as dissemblers. Yea, this checketh themselves for deadly censuring one another, when 'if any man be overtaken in any fault, they which be spiritual should restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering themselves, lest they also be tempted,' Gal. vi. 1. If any man here ask, Why doth not God make all his children to be alike religiously minded, one as well as another? I answer, The Lord may do it for these reasons: First, for the good many times of the godly themselves; for they are suffered to fall for their greater humiliation, the more to let them see their own weakness, to shew that they stand not of themselves; to make them the more to deny themselves, not to be lifted up with any conceit of their own goodness or merit, but to magnify God's mercy for their daily preservation, and for his goodness towards them; and after their fall returning to God, and feeling peace in their renewed repentance, they will the more closely stick to God, more earnestly pray, and more fervently love him; for so great good the Lord works in his children after their falls, yea, such humiliation will be wrought thereby in them, and such comfort, joy, and love in God after their recovery, as no outward crosses, nor outward deliverances, can ever do the like. Secondly, for the further damnation of the wicked, who at the falls of the godly do harden their hearts the more against all religion, thinking it to be a vain thing, and that such as follow and embrace it are no better than others, and that the best be but hypocrites, because they see some grievously overtaken, when these miserable souls should hereby be moved the more to fear their own damnation, except they repent and take a better course; for 'if the righteous scarcely be saved;' if they so hardly get out of their corruptions; if they be so fearfully overtaken, who read, meditate, hear the word, confer thereof, pray much, and humble themselves with tears; 'where shall the wicked and sinner appear?' 1 Peter iv. 18. How can the common and careless Christian be saved? Thus should they reason, to rouse up their spirits, to make them to seek God, and fear damnation, and not take occasion by the falls of some to condemn the profession of religion itself in others, and so to make no account thereof in themselves to the hardening of their own hearts, and so heaping upon themselves the just deserved vengeance.

*And she rose up before one could know another.* That she might be gone away out of the floor before the light, or at the dawning of the day, very early, ere others should be stirring. This she did perhaps out of a joy of heart, and desire to be with Naomi, to tell her the success of her counsel, which she carefully followed, as it may seem by her hasty relation of the matter unto her mother-in-law, when she came unto her, as shall be shewed in the 16th verse. Note here, that they be not drowsy-headed, whose hearts are taken up with their business; they can rise betimes, and prevent the day, whether it be the desire of getting goods, or enjoying pleasure, or to do mischief, which makes some not to rest; or that it be such joy as was

here in Ruth; or a good will to do a thing, as in Abraham to obey God, he arose up early, Gen. xxii. 3, and xxviii. 18; so Jacob to get to his uncle's; Joshua to find out the transgressor in the excommunicate thing, Josh. vii. 16, to put the evil away from Israel; David to go with that which his father sent unto the host, 1 Sam. xvii. 20. So that let the heart be taken up with love, care, joy, desire, it will do anything; the spirit of drowsiness will be shaken off; for it is the careless mind which maketh slothful. To be therefore stirring, and to raise up ourselves out of the bed of idleness, we must set our hearts upon our affairs. I might also note, how darkness keeps us from the knowledge of one another; therefore in darkness man feareth not the face of man, and so is bold to do evil, because he is hid from the sight of others; and as it is in bodily darkness, so in spiritual; the ignorant and blind in soul dare do anything, they blush not, neither be they ashamed, which others enlightened are afraid to commit; neither can they discern one another; for the light of truth they have not. But yet, though men can be hid in darkness from men, they cannot be so from God.

*For he said* (or as others read), *and he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.* If you read *for*, it is a reason from Boaz his speech of her so soon rising; if *and*, then it is his admonition to her, that being risen, she should so get her into the city, that others might not know that they were alone together in the floor that night. Howsoever it be read, Boaz herein sheweth his care of his and her honest name and credit, which might hereby be brought into suspicion, albeit their consciences had told them, that they had done nothing worthy blame, for any act of dishonesty. From hence let us note, first, that it never was, neither yet is a matter of good report, but a suspicion rather of evil, for a man and a woman to be taken together alone in places unfit, unusual, and at times unseasonable. This the words of Boaz do plainly here give us to understand; for man is so apt to this sin of the flesh, yea, the best, without especial grace, as light occasions breed suspicions; because also men are not so charitable as they should be, if any least show of evil may seem to be given this way. Therefore let such as would not be suspected beware how they be in company alone together, when and where suspicions may arise. Secondly, that it is not enough to have our consciences clear before God, but ourselves clear of giving just suspicion of evil before men. This was Boaz his care, and St Paul's, Acts xxiv. 16; for it is not enough to have a good conscience within, but we must have care of our good name, to be well reported of abroad, 2 Cor. viii. 21, which is an excellent thing, better than riches, than ointment, Prov. xxii. 1, Eccles. vii. 1. And this the godly will endeavour to obtain, to stop the mouths of adversaries, Heb. xi. 2, 39, that they may be put to rebuke, 3 John 12, and to procure glory to the gospel which they do profess, 1 Peter ii. 12. This being our duty, then are they reproveable which make no conscience of offence before men, because, say they, our hearts condemn not us, we know we do not what men suspect, when yet the apostle forbids offences, and to look to expediency, and not simply to the lawfulness of a thing, and to avoid all appearances of evil, 1 Cor. x. 32, and xii. 13. There are another sort worse than these, who are so far from avoiding suspicion of evil, as they are not ashamed of the evil itself, being past shame, and dare openly boast of their lewdness, without blushing, of which both Isaiah and Jeremiah do complain, Isa. iii. 9, Jer. vi. 15, and viii. 12.

Ver. 15. *Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.*

Here is Boaz his liberality and testimony of love, noting wherein it was received, what and how much he gave, his helping her up with it to convey and carry it away. And, lastly, his and her departure into the city.

*Also he said.* Boaz his former speech was for her credit, but this is for her comfort; the former stood in words, but this in a good work of mercy. A good man's love appeareth in word and in deed, in good counsel, and in good works of comfort also. This sheweth love to be perfect, not feigned; this is to follow the apostle John his exhortation, 1 John iii. 18, not to love 'in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth;' so loved Boaz, and so do all blessed men love. If therefore the love of work be wanting, and only the love of word, it is counterfeit love, and St James rejecteth it as no love, James ii.

*Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it.* He took occasion from this loose veil to bestow corn upon her; for a good man, in his willingness to do good, will take the smallest occasion to shew it. This word *veil* in another place is translated *mantle*, Isa. iii. 22. It was a loose garment cast upon her, to keep her warm, and to cover her in the night. There was used also among them another veil for the day, to throw over their heads and faces for modesty's sake; such an one had fair Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 65, whose modesty may condemn the wanton going of our women, who yet come short of Rebekah for beauty. I wish also they were not more short of her for honesty. The Arabian women, yea, and so the heathen Roman women, went covered, as do now the women in Spain, not half-naked, as many harlotries do now in England, to the shame of religion and disgrace of the gospel, having both heathen and papists to condemn them. But what care such for the gospel, which want grace? or for religion, which are of none at all, and never yet had their consciences bound to the obedience thereof, but live as libertines, doing what they list, walking after the lust of their own hearts?

*And when she held it.* This implieth some stay till she had folded it to receive his kindness, for he that mindeth truly to do the poor good can be content to stay till they can be ready to receive it. Boaz was not like such as seem to be willing to give the poor a penny, and yet will be gone before he can open his purse to change the niggard's silver; so they blame his not readiness to receive what they only pretended, but never from heart intended, so lewdly deluding the poor. Boaz had shewed her great kindness before, which she received, and now he offers her this mercy again, which she refuseth not. For it is no unmannerliness nor disgrace to take kindness offered of friends, though the parties before have been chargeable, and have often received of their bounty, so long as the one sort be able and voluntarily do give, and the other be poor, and not importunate, yet standing in need to receive; for poverty is a heavy burden, and may justly make excuse for them. And, therefore, such are not to be blamed which do not refuse the often offered bounties of friends; but indeed, such as need not, and will be chargeable to frank-hearted friends, such are basely covetous, and deserve reproof, rather than to have their desire.

*He measured six measures of barley.* Boaz had given much before by his servants; now by his own hand, yet not at random, taking out of the heap he knew not what; but he measured that to her which he gave her. Whence note from his person still giving unto Ruth, and in her to Naomi, that a liberal and merciful heart is not weary of well-doing. Cornelius, a good and devout man, gave daily much alms unto the poor, for his soul delighteth in mercy and works of charity, and desiring to be rich in good works, as the apostle exhorteth, 1 Tim. vi. These examples let us imitate and follow, we must not be weary of well-doing, 2 Thes. iii. 13, Gal. vi. 9, 10; and if we have faith, we will shew forth good works, if it be lively and not dead faith, James ii. They are therefore reproveable who be weary of well-doing; they would give once, but not often, neither at any time much; and yet we beg bread at God's hands daily, and repine if we have it not, and not only for the present, but for the time to come. It is noted of Titus Vespasian,* that he thought he had lost that day in which he had not performed some office of beneficence. Few Christians think as this heathen thought; for then would our great men give more and spend less vainly, that the poor might fare the better. Another sort are here faulty, who continue to give now and then, but are loath to increase their liberality, as God increaseth his bounty in mercy towards them; for if they grow rich, it is he that giveth them power to get riches, Deut. viii. 18, Hosea ii. 8. The third sort are such as turn their love wholly to themselves, and think all little enough for themselves, and that through base covetousness, being never satisfied, so as they live of usury and oppression, getting from others what they can; or, through an aspiring spirit, getting goods to grow great in the world; or else, of a vain unthrifty humour of spending, can spare nothing to give to the poor, because his consuming guests (which ever lodge with him), whoredom, drunkenness, pride, and love of play, do keep him still so bare of money. Another lesson may we learn hence from Boaz his manner of giving by measure, and not hand over head, as we say, without discretion, that liberality is not lavish of God's blessings, giving in judgment, and not without consideration, for every virtue either is or should be guided with prudence. This discretion in Boaz is commendable, and they that will consider what they give before they give, in so doing are not to be reproved.

* Sueton. in vitâ.

*And laid it on her.* See how a willing giver doth not only bestow a benefit, but helpeth the party, if need be, to receive the same; and so doth Boaz here, and so doth also our gracious God in giving his blessings to us. If we, then, be willing to do a good turn, and to bestow a favour upon any, let us not be wanting in any needful thing to further our own liberality towards them, for this will shew that what we give we give with all our hearts unto them.

*And she went into the city.* Our last translation is *she went*, but it should be *he*, as the Hebrew word will make good, and the testimony of the learned in that tongue.* Both went into the city, she to her mother, as the next words in the story do shew, which, by reason of the continuation and series of the narration, maketh it seem most likely that *she* went into the city, as it is commonly translated; and *he* likewise went into the city to despatch the business, and to do what he had promised to Ruth, as it is clear in the next chapter. By thus reading it, and by considering how Boaz before could lie down by the corn, but now out of his affection to marry with Ruth, can leave all to finish that business, we may learn that love is impatient of delay, and maketh a man to lay aside other cares to enjoy his beloved. Concerning the force of this affection, see it in Samson to the maiden of Timnath, Judges xiv. 2, 3; in Jacob to Rachel, Gen. xxix. 20, 30; and in Shechem to Dinah, Gen. xxxiv. 3, 8, 12, 19; for love winneth the whole man, and captivateth his thoughts to the party beloved, as may also be seen in Samson's inordinate love to Delilah, Judges xvi. 4, 16; and in Amnon to Tamar, 2 Sam. xiii. 2, 4. Seeing this affection is so strong, let us labour to bridle it, that it rule not over us for the world or the flesh; and for this end let us set it upon better things worthy our love to the utmost, even on spiritual and heavenly things, Col. iii. 1; upon Christ, as the spouse in the Canticles did, Cant. i. 2, 3, 7, and ii. 14, and St Paul; on his word, as David, Ps. cxix.; on his church, as Moses did, Heb. xi.; and on the appearing of Jesus Christ for our

* Junius, Drusius, Lavater.

final deliverance, as all should, 2 Tim. iv. 8; thus to fix our love will make it holy and ourselves happy.

Ver. 16. *And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done unto her.*

Ruth's return from the floor to Naomi, where a question is asked and answered, with a full relation of all that which had happened.

*And when she came to her mother-in-law.* Ruth having sped, as you hear, and received such kindness for the present, and such hope for the time to come, home she goeth with a glad heart, and that without delay; she hath not her bye-walks, but having done what she went about, according to the advice of Naomi, she, as I said, returneth home again. Three things might move Ruth to hasten home; the danger of the way, being so early, before day; the burden which she bare upon her back, to be eased thereof; and her joy to impart to her mother her happy success. As these made her hie home, and to desire to be with her mother, so should the like make us desirous to be at our home in heaven: first, the danger we be in while here we live in this dark world; then, the burden of sin which we do bear, of which we should be weary, and groan till we be delivered; and, thirdly, our inward joy conceived of our future happiness for ever and for ever.

*Who art thou, my daughter?* So Naomi speaketh, because it was not yet day, that she might know her, and therefore asketh who she was. It may seem by this that Naomi her house was neither bolted nor barred, Ruth coming in so easily, and Naomi not knowing who it was at the first, for poor folks need fear no robbing.

*And she told her all that the man had done unto her.* That is, she related all his kind speeches, and his promise of marrying of her if the other kinsman did refuse her, as appeareth by Naomi her speech in the 18th verse; so that *done* is here put for his word and promise which should be done, which argueth her persuasion that he would do it. And it is an excellent promise of a man to be held so faithful that his promise may be said to be done, for the certainty thereof before it be done. A rare virtue in these days, even among those that would be held no common Protestants. Where almost is he of whom it might be said, when he hath promised, that it is done? where is man's faithfulness become? Mint, anise, and cummin is stood upon; but judgment, mercy, and faith, the weightier matters of the law, are omitted. Naomi asketh Ruth who she was? who answereth not to that, but forthwith relateth Boaz his kindness, with which her mind was taken up; for we speedily relate such things as our hearts be delighted in and much taken up with: for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, whether it be cause of joy or sorrow. If then we would speak of a matter, let our hearts be affected therewith, that will make us speak readily, and neglect other conference; many cannot speak of God nor religion, and some that can will not, desire not; the reason is, their hearts are not affected therewith, for if they were they would be very ready to speak thereof.

Ver. 17. *And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.*

The last words of Ruth in this book are here to Naomi also, shewing who it was that gave the corn, and for whose sake.

*And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me.* Before Ruth telleth of his good words, and here she sheweth his good works; for good words and good works ever concur where true love is, else it is feigned, of which I have spoken before. In that Ruth doth bring home all that which was given to her mother, and kept nothing back to buy herself any necessaries by making sale thereof, it teacheth children honesty; for honest children will not rob their parents of anything, as Micah did, Judges xvii. 1, 2, who stole eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother, which caused her bitterly to curse him till it was restored to her again. Good children will not do so wickedly, though other think it no transgression, as Solomon speaketh, Prov. xxviii. 24.

*For he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.* Ruth telleth why Boaz was so liberal, not for her sake only, but for Naomi her sake also, and that chiefly in his kindness to her. Ruth taketh not this to herself, concealing Boaz his loving respect to Naomi, as if all had been done in favour of her own self, bringing it to Naomi as a token of her love to her, thereby thinking to bind her the more unto her by that office; but presenting it as a favour from Boaz unto her also, relateth the truth of the thing as it passed. By which we may observe, that true and honest minds are just in all their relations, in that which they do know, without colour, without deceit; for they love truth, and do speak it from simplicity of heart, which is the property of the godly, and which we must labour for, Ps. xv. 2. Again, the true and honest minded seek not to procure favour and thanks by that which is the bounty of another, as many do in distributing the alms and benevolence of others, as if it were from themselves, seeking to reap that which they sowed not, and to receive which they deserve not. Thirdly note, that Boaz forgets not Naomi absent; for a faithful friend is mindful of such as he loveth, though absent. Ebed-melech the Morian loved Jeremiah, he therefore forgot him not, though out of sight, out of the court, and now in a miserable prison, but went boldly to the king for him, and reproved the lords and princes openly for doing that wrong to Jeremiah, Jer. xxxviii. 9. Darius affected Daniel, and therefore could not be unmindful of him, Dan. vi.

This is true friendship, and not like the love of such, of whom it may be said, out of sight, out of mind, like the unkind and forgetful butler of Pharaoh, who for a long space forgot innocent Joseph, who interpreted to him his dream in prison, and that to his great comfort, of whom he also prayed to be remembered, when he came to his place again; but the butler was so glad of his own prosperity, that he had no mind to think of Joseph's adversity. Such is the love of men, too common in these days; much kindness in show to men's faces, but if the back be once turned, love is likewise turned, and quite vanished away.

Ver. 18. *Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.*

Naomi, her last words to Ruth, noted in this story, being an exhortation, in which is to be observed, to what, how long, and the reason why.

*Then said she, Sit still, my daughter.* Naomi having heard and seen such testimony of Boaz his love, and knowing his honest nature and true affection, she exhorteth Ruth to sit still, that is, to be of a quiet mind, waiting with patience the issue. The words are figurative, and translated from the action of the body to the action of the mind. By this that Naomi willeth her to be quiet in mind, and without fear, and restlessness of spirit, we may learn, that there is an unquietness of mind in every one naturally to have that effected, which the heart longeth after, as may be seen in Boaz, as before is noted; so in Jacob to see Joseph, when he heard that he was alive, Gen. xlv. 4, 28; in Abraham's servant, in procuring and bringing home a wife to Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 12, 56; in the Israelites, seeking to punish the Gibeonites, for the villany committed upon the Levite's wife, Judges xx. 1, 18, 19, 24, 28; and as in good, so also is the heart restless in seeking to bring evil to pass; for the wicked cannot rest, till they have done evil. See this in Delilah, in hope of money, to betray Samson into the hands of the Philistines, Judges xvi.; and in Judas, to deliver Christ to his enemies; and in Absalom, to get the kingdom from his father. Which earnestness ariseth sometime of fear, as Ruth's here fearing to fail of her desire; sometime of covetousness and desire of gain, as in Judas and Delilah; of malice and desire of revenge, as in the scribes and Pharisees, enemies of Christ; of joy and gladness, as in Abraham's servant; of an aspiring and vain glorious humour, as in Absalom; of love and affection to one, as in Shechem to Dinah. By this then may we see, whence it is that men pursue their pleasures, profits, honours, and their desires in that which they go about so eagerly, even because they have their hearts fixed thereupon; and on the contrary, why people so little follow after godliness, so much neglect it, even for that their hearts are far from it. Thus may we learn to judge of ourselves, and thus we lay open ourselves to be judged of others.

*Until thou know how the matter will fall.* As if she had said, thou hast done thy part, the issue is in God's hands, which thou must wait for with patience; for when we have done what on our behalf is to be done, then are we to rest in the expectation of the issue, as Naomi adviseth Ruth here. So must we wait on God, trust in him, and commit our ways unto him, as we be exhorted, Isa. xxviii. 16, Ps. xxxvii. 5; but yet in well-doing, Ps. xxxvii. 3, and in the exercise of prayer, as Isaac did for good success to his father's servant, when he went to get a wife for him, Gen. xxiv.; and as Moses did for the victory, when the Israelites fought against the Amalekites, Exod. xvii. 11, 12.

*For the man will not be in rest, till he have finished the thing.* Naomi, her reason to persuade Ruth to rest, and not to let her thoughts trouble her, nor to fear by delay to be deceived of her expectation, because Boaz would not rest, till he himself had done what she desireth. An approved truth of a man in one thing, may make certain the truth of his word in another. It is equity and charity to hope well, where we have good proof of a man's faithfulness; and this is true credit, when a man's word is become of that force and validity as it maketh another to believe him without doubting. Such was Boaz his credit with Naomi; and this is it which likewise she would, and doth persuade Ruth unto. This is the credit which we must labour for, and which we may attain unto, if we fear God, and be faithful to him (for false to God, will prove faithless to man); if we be discreet and wise in our words, to know what we promise, before we make it; if we care to keep ever our word in the least thing; if we hate lying, and such as do make lies, we shall procure credit to our word. And here let such as find men careful of their word, be like Naomi, in trusting and not wronging them, by calling their word into question without cause at any time, when they are known to have ever approved themselves for honest men; for what greater injury can be offered to an honest man, ever meaning well, and careful to keep his word, than to be suspected of the breach of his word unjustly? A true-hearted man taketh that injury very tenderly; and therefore let men beware of giving offence in this kind, by entertaining unjust and uncharitable thoughts towards such as deserve it not.

## CHAPTER IV.

THIS chapter is the last of the book, and the last part of the history; for the first sheweth how Ruth came to Bethlehem; the second, how she behaved herself when she came there; the third, her

contract with Boaz. And this, the solemnisation of the marriage; where is declared what went before, and how it was effected; then the marriage itself, and the great applause of the people and elders thereto. Thirdly, the happy issue thereof in the conception and birth of Obed. And lastly, a genealogy from Pharez unto David, the king and prophet of Israel, and the type of Jesus Christ, who, according to the flesh, sprung from his loins.

Ver. 1. *Then Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down there: and behold the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by, unto whom he said, Ho, such a one: turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down.*

Boaz prosecuteth the matter intended; and here is shewed when, where, how, and with whom he had to do about it. Before I come to the words, note generally, that though both Naomi and Ruth had tasted of a poor and low estate, yet were they now exalted and greatly comforted, so as now no more *Mara*, but, as before, *Naomi;* for after humiliation, in time follows exaltation, after sour sweet, and after mourning joy. Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all, Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6. Israel may go into bondage in Egypt, but they shall return triumphing. Joseph shall be tried, before he stand before Pharaoh; and David, before he be settled in his throne; and Moses, before he be the princely leader of the Israelites; and when thus they have tasted of the sour, assure themselves they shall feel the sweet with joy, as both Naomi and Ruth do here: for the Lord will at length set up on high those that be low, Job v. 11, that those which mourn may be exalted in safety. The Lord will humble his, to make them see themselves, to try their love, their patience and faith, and to fit them for his blessings, that they may know how well to use them, before they enjoy them; and then will he afford them their heart's desire, and make them merry and glad with the joy of his countenance. Therefore after humiliation look for exaltation: this will work comfort under the cross, and make us patiently await the time of our deliverance.

*Then went Boaz.* That is, that morning, not deferring what he had promised, chap. iii. 11, 13, where I spoke of the keeping of his word, which here he accomplished. See there this truth, that an honest man will be careful to keep his word, which here I will no farther insist upon. Note farther, that what is done with the heart, is done cheerfully and speedily. Boaz goeth about this without delay; yea, so did Abraham in a matter of rare obedience, Gen. xxii., yea, he rose up betimes early in the morning to sacrifice his son: for what the heart is won unto, there the whole man is set on work; if Shechem's heart cleave to Dinah, he will not defer the matter, to be circumcised, that he may enjoy the desire of the heart, Gen. xxxiv. 3, 19. By this may we discover whether the heart go with a business. If it be done cheerfully and speedily, the heart is with it; if but slowly, and without alacrity, the heart is absent, as in many which come so to the church, and being come, sit as dead, without any liveliness, because their hearts are elsewhere.

*Unto the gate.* The gate was the place of judgment, as many places in Scripture shew.* Now why it was there, these may be the reasons; first, for easy access of all sorts, as well strangers as inhabitants, to the place of justice, from which none are to be kept back. In open places is the more room; secondly, for the better manifestation of justice in the sight and hearing of all, which taketh away suspicion of injustice; thirdly, for the preventing of thronging by the concourse of people, not wholesome, and sometime dangerous, in those hot countries; fourthly, that such as passed to and fro, might be called into the business, either as witnesses or parties sometime, as it fell out in this session here, with the kinsman coming at unawares; fifthly, because the gates be the strength and munition of the city; now, there for magistrates to sit, doth more grace their authority, who sit here as commanders in the place, able to command the whole town; sixthly and lastly, to put all that enter into the city in mind of well-doing, and to take heed of evil. These be my conjectures; but whatsoever the reason was, this may we learn, that public causes are for public places, and there to be determined of: for in such cases the Lord commandeth to go up to the gate of the city; as also it was the manner of the heathen thereabouts so to do. It befitteth the cause; it preventeth suspicion of sinister dealing in private; and public places do grace more authority than private meetings. And therefore this course is to be approved, and the private hearing of public business, as in criminal causes, is against the apostle's canon; and hereby great evils fall out; justice is perverted, and sin often unpunished, the offenders let go for gain, who should be made examples, that other might hear and fear, Deut. xxi. 21.

*And sat him down there.* Seats were prepared before for him and the rest, as the common place of justice; which sitting down of him in the public place of justice, sheweth that he was a judge and a man of authority, and the best also in the assembly, because he took the first place. Note briefly, first, that sitting is the gravest gesture for judges and magistrates in places of judgment; so ever set out, Prov. xxxi. 23, Mat. xix. 28, Rev. xx. 4; and so ever used in those parts, and likewise with us; which therefore is to be observed for the better setting forth of their authority, which they should mind to grace by all means in the people's eyes, for more reverence sake. Secondly, that God so guideth by his providence these worldly estates, that ever some are better men in place and dignity than other some: such a one was Job, chap.

* Gen. xxxiv. 20, Deut. xvii. 5, and xxi. 19, and xxii. 15, 24, and xxv. 7, Prov. xxxi. 23, Joshua xx. 4, Job xxix. 7.

i. 1, and xxix. 7–9; and so Boaz here, for the preservation of peace in church and commonwealth; which hand of God we are to praise him for, and to pray unto him to uphold this inequality of persons; for else what would follow but disorder and confusion, and every man would do what he list, Judges xvii. 6, and xviii. 1. See this with ourselves when men of equality meet, and have light occasions offered: oh how do they scornfully behave themselves one to another! Thirdly, that men of place, according to their dignity, may take their place without stain of pride; for Boaz doth it: it is also their right, and it preserveth order, and that dignity which God hath given them. Therefore may they take their place; yet so as they be humble, and not haughtily-minded, neither proudly contend for it, and so disturb public peace, which should ever be most dear to every one, especially to men in authority. If men may take their place, then such are blame-worthy, which, with an envious eye, find fault with any for so doing; and they also do amiss, which out of too great humility (to speak but so of it) do lose their due place, and therewithal so much of due respect unto their person and degree, yielding their place to the less worthy, and so lift up the other in pride, and make themselves of less esteem. But as there be some such so lowly-minded, so are there others too highly-conceited of themselves, who will take place of their betters, assuming to themselves more than they deserve. This is pride and hateful arrogancy.

*And behold the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by.* Chap. iii. 12, 13. This word of attention, *Behold*, calleth the reader to a remarkable thing, and to an especial providence of God, in bringing this kinsman thus hither; not as yet called or sent for. If he had been sent for, or called, and so come of purpose, it seemeth the Holy Ghost would not have said, *Behold*. This, then, was the guiding hand of God to further this match. Whence we do learn, that when God will prosper a business, his providence will apparently be seen in that business, and in the success thereof, as you may see before in Boaz his coming into the field, and Ruth's lighting upon his reapers, chap. ii.; so in Abraham's servant guided to Laban's house, and in Rebekah, her coming out whilst he prayed standing by the well, and she performing everything according as he had prayed immediately before, Gen. xxiv. Such a providence was seen in the Midianites' coming by to go into Egypt, while Joseph lay in the pit, that he might be sold to them, that they might carry him into Egypt, as God had determined, Gen. xxxvii. The like providence in Moses's preservation by Pharaoh's daughter, Exod. ii., is very apparent; for God's providence is his guiding hand to effect what he hath decreed; he willeth, and then his providence worketh the same. Which, if we will observe, we may easily see in our courses, and say, Behold, the providence of God, and by well marking the same, we would be moved greatly to praise God; we would not murmur against crosses; we would commit our ways unto him, and wait on his good pleasure with patience in all our affairs, knowing this certainly, that if he hath determined a thing, it shall come to pass, though in man's reason most unlikely.

*Unto whom he said, Ho, such a one, &c.* This kinsman was of worth. It appeareth by this, that he sat next Boaz, before the ten elders; that he was able to redeem land so soon after ten years' dearth; that he regarded so much the marring of his own inheritance; and lastly, because he was of the same family of Elimelech, and in birth before Boaz, yet by place it may seem that Boaz was his better, though Boaz would not stand upon his greatness and power with him, but he would proceed in this business according to equity and right, respecting so himself, as yet he would not wrong another, but do what was most meet to be done; teaching this, that a godly man, a just man, will not do what he may by his power, but what he ought by right. Such a one was Nehemiah (Nehem. vii. 15), and Abraham (Gen. xiv. 22, 23), who would not do according to that which was in their hand, but what was agreeable to justice, and fit for them to do. Nehemiah giveth the reason, because he feared God. This was it also that made Joseph so to deal with his brethren, and not according to his power and their deserts. This is it which made Job not to contemn his servant, for he knew his servant, as well as himself, to be the Lord's. Oh then, let men of power imitate these men of might! it will argue that they also fear God, Prov. xiv. 2; and upright and just dealing is more acceptable to God than sacrifices, Prov. xxi. 3. Men must not be like Nimrods nor Sauls, to make their lusts a law, and their power the bounds of their practice. Remember Jezebel, 1 Kings xxi. 7, who took by force and fraud Naboth's vineyard, but she at length dearly paid for the same. Note hence again, that one not before another by birth, may be his better by authority, as Boaz was here; so Moses before Aaron, Joseph before his brethren, and David before his; for God advanceth not men as they be in birth, but as his good pleasure is. And therefore let the elder submit to the younger, if God please to have it so; and men descended of nobles submit to mean men advanced by God, and that without envy or disdain; for God fetcheth beggars from the dunghill, to set them among princes, 1 Sam. ii. Promotion is not from east or west, but from his hand, therefore must we rest contented. Thirdly note, that a man according to his authority may speak to another with authority, though in some respect the same be his better, as the kinsman is here by birth, to whom Boaz yet thus speaketh. But why did he not name him? Boaz did name, as these words '*Such a one*,' do shew; but the penman of the Spirit passeth him by, either as not material, or rather for that he was a worldling, loving land better than

God's law, vers. 4, 6; desiring the one, but not caring to obey the other. Hereby giving us to know, that he which loveth more the world and his own outward estate, than the law and word of God, is worthy to have no name in God's book, in the book of life. Therefore 'Take heed and beware of covetousness:' old father Latimer's text.

*Turn aside, sit down here.* Boaz willeth him to set aside his private business for this public work, and to sit down to hear the matter; the matter concerned them both, and Boaz doth call him into the court and place of judgment about it. Whence note, that it is lawful, upon just cause, for one man to call another into public places of justice to clear men's rights. For this cause, God himself appointed amongst his people public courts of justice, Exod. xxii. 8; gave them laws to judge by, and allowed men to take the benefit thereof; and godly men have sat as judges, as Moses, Exod. xviii. 15; David, 1 Chron. xviii. 14, and others; for without this, some controversies cannot be ended, so perverse and partial are many in their own cause. Which confuteth the anabaptists, who allow not of magistrates, and this course of justice in ending controversies. Yet, on the other side, albeit men may sue one another, it must not be for every trifle; it must not be in revenge, malice, and with desire to hurt my neighbour; it must be the last remedy, and when men go to law, they must do it in love, use the law as a judge and moderator, and therefore must they choose the most honest lawyers, which will not sell their tongues, and abuse their wits for gain; they are to beware of bribing any; they must not use circumventions, but be content, peaceably and lovingly, to let the equity of the law decide the matter, and therein quietly rest.

*And he turned aside, and sat down.* Though this man was one of some worth among them, and a worldly man too, yet he for this public business, and for to shew his obedience to authority, turneth aside from his private affairs, and doth sit down, as Boaz did will him. Whence, note first, That when any are called to public business, private are to be laid aside for the time, to further the public, as this man doth here, and as all good members of a commonwealth should do, for that public actions and public causes should be more near and dear to us than private; for in public things there is a respect unto the private, which is more safe in the safety of that which is public. Therefore, such as do neglect wholly public welfare, and attend only to the private good of their own estate, they do amiss, and even so, as if a member of the body should see to itself, and neglect the body, which is the way at length to bring ruin upon itself, which it seeks to prevent. This reproveth such as being able and fit men for public businesses, do labour yet by all means to avoid them. As also, much more such as being called by public authority, yea, and bound by oath to the same, do nevertheless live as if no such duty were imposed upon them, and are wholly taken up with the thoughts of their own private and household affairs. This so great neglect of that which is public, is no small detriment to the commonweal; this great care of every man for himself and for his own private, and little, or rather none, for the public, is the cause of so great and so many evils everywhere among men. Secondly, that men are to yield readily to lawful authority commanding, whatsoever worth they be of, which are so commanded. Men must be like the Israelites, and do as they said they would do to Joshua, even to obey readily in all things, and so to uphold his authority, as also they would oppose themselves against such as would not obey, Joshua i. 16–18. David was very obedient unto Saul, albeit he was anointed himself, he stood not upon his right, but waited the Lord's time, and was willingly obedient. Thus should we be to lawful authority, as the apostle exhorteth, Rom. xiii. 1–4, Titus iii. 1, and that by many reasons, in the epistle to the Romans, though in those times the kings and governors were heathen and bloody persecutors. This condemneth those which are like Korah and his company; and like Absalom and his associates in conspiracy, which are so far from obedience, as they rise up in open rebellion against lawful authority. Such were the counterfeit catholics; and such be they ever in heart, though not alway in action, in this our sovereign's dominions. This also checketh those which, though they hate treason and rebellion, and will not disobey supreme authority, yet will despise inferior officers; but they are commanded the contrary, as the apostle Peter teacheth, 1 Peter ii. 13; for not only the king as supreme, but also such as be sent of him, are to be obeyed of conscience for the Lord's sake.

Ver. 2. *And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.*

Here is set down the assistants in this business: how many, what they were, whence taken, and their sitting down in the place of judgment with Boaz and the kinsman, after that Boaz had willed them so to do.

*And he took ten men.* The elders and people were gathered together, it may seem, before unto the gate; whether it was that they were especially sent for, or that they hearing that Boaz was gone up to the gate of the city, and so came voluntarily, as it was perhaps their manner so to do when they heard of any to go up to the place of judgment, it is not certain; but the elders were there and the people also, ver. 11, and of the elders, he chose only ten to sit in the place of judgment. Why only ten, is no reason given; it may be, the number was chosen according to the ten years of Naomi her absence in Moab, chap. i. 4, or according to the number of the ten commandments, to put them in mind of their duty, or for what else, I will not further conjecture; it was a number thought fit in this case for the hearing and determining of the matter.

This we note in Boaz taking of these men, men of authority, that public causes are to be handled before public persons, and of them a competent number for the determining thereof, Deut. xxv. 7, Joshua xx. 4; for therefore are such appointed, public persons for public causes; and by such as have authority to end matters, the thing in hand is more firmly established, and if there have been before, or might after, contention arise, the same hereby is cut off and prevented. And therefore, in such cases, let such fit persons and so many be judges, as may by their authority end businesses between one another.

*Of the elders.* Here I will note, first, what elders were; secondly, of whom chosen; thirdly, of what sort of persons; fourthly, why set over the people; and lastly, why called elders. For the first, elders were men of authority, 1 Kings xx. 7, 8, distinguished from the people, and joined with others, so as it is said, the *princes and elders*, Ezra x. 8, Judges viii. 6, 14–16; *judges and elders*, Deut. xxi. 2; *elders and officers*, Num. xi. 16. Under this name were the chief in the commonwealth comprehended, both out of Israel, Joshua ix. 11, Num. xxii. 7, and in Israel, as in many places it fully appeareth; and therefore princes are included in elders, Judges viii. 6, 14–16, and rulers and elders made one, Ezra v. 9, 10, and vi. 7, 8. The chief of the king's house were called elders, 2 Sam. xii. 17, and such as in every city bare rule, Deut. xxi. 3, 19, 20; for those which were appointed in every city to be judges and officers in Deut. xvi. 18, are everywhere after called by the name of the elders of the city, Deut. 20, and xxii. 15–18. Thus the Lord ordained governors to rule his people. For the second, they were chosen by the people, and admitted by Moses, as himself in a place witnesseth, Deut. i. 13, which was to them a great liberty and freedom. For the third, they were of the best, able, and fittest men, Exod. xviii. 21,* thus to be qualified; first, to be men of wisdom and understanding, Deut. i. 13, and not childish and simple persons; for that is a punishment upon the people, to have such over them, Isa. iii. 4; secondly, to be good men, religious, and fearing God, 2 Chron. xix. 11; for such should rule over men, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, as have conscience towards God, under whom, and for whose glory they are to rule; and with those the Lord will be, 2 Chron. xix. 11; thirdly, to be men of truth, as Jethro adviseth, Exod. xviii. 21, that is, true men, Gen. xlii. 11, as Joseph's brethren call themselves; such as are that which they seem to be, not pretending one thing and intending another, but in the course of justice do follow the truth of the cause, as the truth thereof shall appear unto them; fourthly, to be men hating covetousness, Deut. xvi. 19, else they will take bribes, Prov. i. 19, and love dishonest gain, and pervert justice, Ezek. xxii. 27, 1 Sam. viii. 3; fifthly, to be known men in these things, Deut. i. 13. When such are set over a people, let us praise God and rejoice; and where such be wanting, pray to God to send them; and where the contrary be, lament and bewail the estate of such a people. Touching the fourth, why they be set over a people? For the praise of the good, and the punishment of the bad, 1 Peter ii. 13, 14; and to rule in justice and in judgment, and to govern the people, 2 Chron. ix. 8, for that we be all of a rebellious nature since the fall of Adam. Now, to govern well, magistrates and men in authority must do two things: first, they must find out offences, they must inquire, and search out the same diligently, Deut. xiii. 12, Job xxix. 16, Deut. xvii. 4; for one rebellious Jonah may hazard many men's lives, and the sinking of the ship, Jonah i.; so one Achan may weaken a whole army, Joshua vii., and therefore it is necessary to seek them out, that sin may be punished, and God's wrath appeased. Secondly, they must justly proceed against offences, and that thus: first, they must set God's fear before them, as Jehoshaphat exhorts, 2 Chron. xix. 7. Secondly, they must do it in the spirit of courage, Deut. i. 17, 2 Chron. xix. 11, Job xxix. 17, and xxxi. 34, not fearing the face of any, though many, though mighty. Thirdly, they must deal equally, without respect of person, hearing the small as well as the great, not wresting judgment, but judge the people with just judgment, Deut. i. 17, and xvi. 18, 19. For the last, why called elders? It may be they were chosen of the ancient of the people, or for the most part of such: for the Hebrew word here (מזקני) cometh of the verb which signifieth to be waxen old; and the assembly of the elders is called the *Synedrion* of the old men, συνέδριον γερόντων, by the Grecians; and of these is it most meet that judges and magistrates be chosen; first, for their wisdom and experience, though wisdom doth not always abide with the aged, Job xxxii. 9. Secondly, for that such give counsel with more mature deliberation, and have not the force of affection to over-sway them, as youth hath, which therefore is rash, and giveth often ill counsel, of which Rehoboam tasted and repented. Thirdly, for the gravity of their countenance, which giveth grace and credit to their authority, and so are not so subject to contempt, as the young in years be; for the hoary head is to be honoured, Lev. xix. 32, and age is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness, Prov. xvi. 31. Fourthly, because they have a strong motive to persuade them to upright dealing, even their old age and the nighness of death. This made some heathen to be upright and stout against the mighty,* as Solon against Pisistratus, and Cecilius against Cæsar; the former said, his old age made him so to withstand the attempts of the tyrant, and the latter told his friends that his old age, and being also childless, made him dare to speak so roundly and freely against Cæsar. We see, then, what reason there is that the governors should be an-

* See Zipper. de Lege Mos. lib. iii. cap. 9.

* Plut. lib. *An senibus sit gerenda Resp.* Laert. Tul. *de senect.* Val. Max.

cient men, such as well might be called elders, not only for authority, but for their years and gravity.

*Of the city.* To wit, of Bethlehem; for in every city, by God's appointment, there were officers and judges, the elders of the people, Deut. xvi. 18, Ezra x. 14, 2 Chron. xix. 5. How many were in every city is not certain; in this, besides Boaz and the kinsman, were ten. And it is said, *ten of them*, implying more. In Succoth were princes and elders threescore and seventeen, Judges viii. It may seem, that the number of them was either greater or lesser, according to the populousness of the inhabitants, and largeness of the cities; only in Jerusalem was the great *Synedrion*, consisting of the seventy-two elders constantly. In every city were courts of justice, and every matter came before those elders; as matters concerning idolatry, rebellion, and obstinacy of children given to riotousness; also murder, adultery, theft, and injuries offered, and slander; so matters of marriage, and sale of land, as here in this place.* The punishments† which they inflicted were pecuniary sometime, sometime beating and whipping, and sometime death itself; likewise to this death were put enticers to idolatry, and such as committed it; also a young woman that should play the whore in her father's house, and those that committed adultery; likewise the sacrilegious person, the blasphemer, the wizard, and the obstinate, gluttonous, and drunken son, all were stoned, Lev. xxiv. 14, and xxi. 9, and xx. 14. Some were to be burnt, as the priest's daughter playing the whore, and the incestuous person; and this death may seem to be before the law for whoredom, Deut. xxi. 22. Some were hanged for some offences; but before the punishment was inflicted, and before sentence was pronounced, there was diligent inquiry of the fact, and also competent witnesses to justify the same, Deut. xvii. 4, and xix. 15, 19; for not one, but two or three witnesses were to establish a matter; and if any false witnesses were found, that was done to them which they had thought to have done to another. Thus we see, how these elders proceeded in justice, from whom there was no appeal in any matter, but in that which was too hard; and then were the parties to go to Jerusalem, unto the priests, the Levites and judges there, and abide that sentence without gainsaying, and that upon peril of their life. From the consideration of these things afore delivered, touching superiority, and courts of justice everywhere, and such a court from which could be no appeal, we may observe, first, that superiority of some above the rest is the ordinance of God, for the well governing of a commonwealth. The chief and best is that which is monarchical, when a king ruleth over the people, so be he as Moses describeth, Deut. xvii. 19, 20, and not as Samuel, 1 Sam. viii. 11, 18; for God set first one, even king Moses, as he is called, Deut. xxxiii. 5, over the people, and Moses prayeth that one might be set over the people, lest that the Israelites should be as sheep without a shepherd, yea, though then there were captains over thousands, hundreds, and tens, and the seventy elders upon whom the Lord had put his Spirit. Again, we read that the Lord saved his people by judges or princes, raised up to lead them and to be judges over them, Judges iii., and iv., and vi. Furthermore, when the Israelites were seated in Canaan, and that there were the seventy-two elders, also in every city elders, yet is it said, that every one did what seemed him good, because there was no king in Israel, Judges xvii., and xviii., and xxii. Moreover, Israel never came to be renowned, freeing themselves from all their enemies, and subduing them which were round about them, till they had a king over them. Lastly, it is the wisdom of nations, both civil and barbarous heathen, 1 Sam. viii. 5, besides the church of God, to allow of this kind of government, such as the Lord hath now placed over us, that so every man may not do what he listeth; and therefore are we to rest thankful therewith, and praise the name of our God. Secondly, that in well governed commonwealths (like that of Israel, ordered by the wisdom of God himself), there should be many courts of justice, and so many, and so near the towns and villages, that the people might have speedy recourse thither, to end any cause which might fall out among them. In every city in Israel, in every tribe and city thereof, were courts of justice, Deut. xvi. 16. In Judah were an hundred and twelve cities, which was but a little circuit, even so many courts for justice and judgment, to which the towns and villages resorted which belonged to them; and in them, as is before noted, were all matters handled, without going any farther. This would prevent long journeys, and so great expenses of subjects; this would sooner bring causes to the hearing, and matters to an end; this were the way to have sin more easily and sooner punished. The Israelites did not stay till quarter-sessions, till assizes every half year; till which time causes must rest, prisoners lie and die in prison, or else learn such villanies there, as they will be ever the worse for when they be delivered. The Israelites were not constrained to take long journeys every term to the chief city of their kingdom to try matters, as we do, and as we were wont to do, even to go much farther, to Rome from England, heretofore; but all had courts for every matter, for all offences, for controversies of every nature, hard at hand, and daily kept for any to have access unto. Which I thus speak of only, not to condemn utterly our courses, but to set out the political estate of the Jews, a platform of government devised by God himself, and therefore worthy imitation of all nations, and that before any other whatsoever; for the wisdom of no lawgiver can be compared to the wisdom of this heavenly lawgiver. Thirdly, that it is meet

* Deut. xvii. 3, 5, and xxi. 18, and xix. 11, and xxii. 21, 24; Exod. xxii.; Deut. xxii. 14, 18.

† Deut. xxii. 19, and xxv 2; Lev. xix. 30; Deut. xiii. 10, and xvii. 5, and xxii. 21, 24; Joshua vii.

that such a court of justice be in every well ordered state, whose sentence should be definitive, and with which men should rest. So was it in Israel, from which none might decline upon pain of death, Deut. xvii. 11, 12. This would curb contentions and unquiet spirits, which be full of molestations, when by their purse they can maintain their will, bringing causes from court to court, and about again, only to make the weaker party weary, and so to wring from him his right, or else to be utterly undone in following the suit: a grievous sin, and that which crieth aloud in the ears of the Lord, though lawyers fill their purses by such devilish devices. Their money perish with them, which make themselves rich by such iniquities!

*And he said, Sit ye down here.* Thus spake he to the ten elders, when the kinsman was set down. Which sheweth, that as Boaz was a great man, so also the kinsman was of greater place than they, seeing he was placed before them, yet they did not of themselves do anything, neither did enter upon the business before these were set: so did he esteem of them and their authority. Whence may be noted, that wise men in government do so behave themselves, as they will take heed to do nothing that might weaken the authority of such as be fellows in office, judges, justices, and officers with them; for they know, that what they derogate from them, they take from themselves, as they be magistrates. And therefore must magistrates uphold such as be in authority with them; though some perhaps for their person be unworthy, yet must they be regarded for the place they bear; and this shall they do, if, as Boaz here, they give them place with them, then not presume to handle matters apart without them, equally belonging to all; and thirdly, to be content to have their own causes heard and judged by them. The contrary hereto doth argue light esteem of fellows in commission, if not contempt.

*And they sat down.* Here was no exception taken against Boaz in anything; he commanded in a sort, and they obeyed, for the spirit of envy and pride were banished, else the matter had not thus been done in such peace and quietness; for where one taketh no more upon him than he may, and other yield what they ought, being humble and not haughty, there everything is done peaceably, as we see here; but where a Moses meeteth with a rebellious-spirited, proud Korah and his company, there all things fall out contrarily. The word *to sit* is used sometime to consider of, to advise, to take care of; and the gesture of sitting, which was the gesture of kings and judges, 1 Kings i. 48, Prov. xx. 8, Mat. xix. 28, 2 Sam. vii. 1, is a gesture of rest, quietness and peace; to teach this, that men in the seat of judgment should be advised, considerate, careful what they do, and of a quiet spirit, without perturbation. Such a one was Joshua, in his proceeding against Achan, Joshua vii. 19, 25; he spake mildly, lovingly, without passion, without words of bitterness, or contempt, yet did he not neglect to execute justice upon him, as he well deserved, and the cause required; he derided not the prisoner, he railed not upon him; but with a fatherly gravity and words of like authority he spake unto him. His example is for imitation, and a check to some deriding and scoffing spirits, sitting as judges upon life and death.

Ver. 3. *And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech's.*

Thus Boaz beginneth his speech of the sale of land, who it was that would sell it, how much, a parcel, and to whom it did belong before, as thereby shewing her right unto it, not as an inheritrix, but as a dowry to her, as his wife.

*And he said unto the kinsman.* Before Boaz uttered the cause of his coming into that session, he saw all settled, and audience given; for though he earnestly affected the business, as may appear by that which hath been delivered of him in the former chapter, yet would he carry the matter wisely and discreetly; hereby teaching this, that the wisdom of a wise man keepeth him so, as he is not carried beyond discretion; for wisdom maketh him to understand his way, to be also well advised, to work by understanding, and to order his ways with discretion, Prov. xiv. 8, and xiii. 10, 16. Such therefore as be overswayed with any passion, either of love, or anger, or what else exceeding discretion, want wisdom at that time to bridle their disordered affection, and unruly passion, which is often brutish, without religion, and therefore unbefitting a godly man. Note farther, that Boaz having a cause, he in this great session of ten elders, besides the rest, declareth the matter himself, it being a happy liberty in that commonwealth. It was not like those places, where men cannot be allowed to speak in their own cause, though they be never so able, but they must hire others to speak for them; by which it cometh to pass, that causes are spun out to an exceeding length, and not often faithfully handled; for men hired to set their wits and tongues on sale, what will they not do? Doth not our age produce enow evil, lamentable and cursed fruits hereof? And have we not cause to bewail the manifold mischiefs and ensuing miseries, which this generation of evil men bringeth forth daily among us?

*Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab.* Of her person, and return from that place, see before, chap. i. 6. Here she is propounded as the saleswoman; the land she had by Elimelech her husband, as the last words of this verse shew, as her jointure or dowry, for wives had land among the Jews and Israelites, 2 Kings viii. 6. And good reason there is that wives should be provided for by them which have lands to leave them, because they are one with the husband, they have laboured together, and love binds

the husband to have care for her after death; for her comfort, her better esteem even with her own children; for if they have anything, then children will love and honour them, and glad will they seem to be which of them may have her company, and may please her best; but if she have nothing, they will be as glad which may be rid of her. Therefore let husbands have a care to provide for them, and not be like some husbands, which give all or most to children, and little or nothing to wives, but what law will give them; and that he may so do, let the wife labour to deserve well of the husband; and yet though she deserve well, let him not give all to her, and little to children, as some do, and so undo both herself and children with an after-choice of a bad husband.

*Selleth a parcel of land.* That is, determineth to sell a portion or piece of land left her by Elimelech. She was grown poor, and therefore might sell her land; for so we do read, that the poor might sell land or houses; and this selling and buying is lawful, Lev. xxv. 25, 29, as we may see by God's approbation, and the practice of the godly in buying and selling, Gen. xxiii. The manner of purchase, and sale, and conveyance is shewed in the prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. xxxii. 6, 44. It must be without oppression; and this will be avoided if men fear God. But the Lord allowed not the sale but upon necessity: he must become poor first. The Jewish interpreters upon that place of Leviticus say that no man but the poor might sell his inheritance; others might not sell, to put money in their purses, to make merchandise, or other things, save only for food and necessary livelihood. How justly, then, are here condemned among us such as sell their lands for to spend at play, to run a-whoring, to go gaily, and in costly raiment, to keep hawks and hounds, to travel into idolatrous countries to see fashions, and to learn not good manners, but bad conditions with apish compliments! Others also which sell their possessions because they would live idly, to put the money out to usury, and so live lazily, but yet cursedly, upon the sweat of other men's brows, these and the other should say with Naboth, God forbid that I should sell my fathers' inheritance, especially selling as these do, to bestow and lay out the money so accursedly. But let such unthrifts know, which sell their land to waste upon their lust, that they do wickedly rob their posterity, they weaken their present estate, they bring upon themselves beggary, and so contempt and misery, and that very justly, and do, as much as lieth in them, root out their names from the places where their ancestors, by God's blessing, had planted them; and when all is spent, they expose themselves to many temptations, to take lewd courses to help themselves, which bring many to a shameful end. Let them remember that if they cannot live with their estates, how can they live without them. Pains they cannot take; they have idly been brought up, which often is the cause of this prodigality. To beg they be ashamed, because of reproach justly to light upon them, therefore must they fall to stealing, and so come that way into the magistrate's hands, that they may be punished for their former villanies, which the magistrate took no notice of, or made no conscience to punish.

*Which was our brother Elimelech's.* Thus Boaz calleth him, who was but his kinsman, though near. This was usual among the Jews and Israelites so to call one another; yea, it is observable that God's people, in all ages, have called one another brethren, before the law, under the law, and in the time of the gospel;* and good reason so to do, for they have all one father, and all one mother; which should teach us brotherly love one towards another; to love as brethren, that is, with respect to our Father, and we his adopted children; for whoso after this manner loveth is translated from death to life. Also such as love like brethren are familiar, they have a feeling of each other's estate both in prosperity and adversity, rejoicing or sorrowing, as it falleth out, and that because they be brethren; they do also shew readiness to help one another, as brethren should do, and they hold it a shame to do them wrong. Therefore let us love, and love as brethren, and try it by these true brother-like marks of love, which, if a man do, he shall find little brotherly love among men; for few love a man in this respect, as he is the child of God; few are familiar with the virtuous for their virtue's sake. And who mourneth with them in the true cause of their mourning, or rejoiceth with them in their joy? If men so do, where is their helping hand to further their joy, or to help them when they be troubled for righteousness' sake?

Ver. 4. *And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it besides thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.*

Boaz here sheweth why he telleth the kinsman of Naomi her selling of land to offer him the sale first. In which offer note, first, what the offer is, to buy it; then, before whom; thirdly, the manner of propounding it, as left free to his choice, to redeem or not to redeem; fourthly, the reason why offered to him in the first place, and that by Boaz; lastly, the kinsman's answer, taking the offer.

*And I thought to advertise thee.* To wit, of the sale of the land. And this Boaz doth, for that he had to deal with a worldling, with whom he would deal plainly, in telling him first of that which most affected him, and of the earthly commodity, before he spake of marrying Ruth. Whence we may learn, first, that world-

* Gen. xiv. 14, Exod. ii. 11, Lev. xix. 17, Deut. xiii. 19, Rom. i. 13, Mat. vi., Gal. iv. 26, 1 Pet. ii. 17, Rom. xii. 10, Heb. xiii. 1, 1 Thes. iv. 9, 1 John iii. 14.

lings are carried away most with wordly respects, therefore Boaz doth thus begin with the kinsman; for worldlings savour only of the earth, like moles which live in it; and though they now and then come up out of the earth, they by and by run again into it. They are like the serpent, whose seed they be, living upon the dust of the earth, gold, silver, and transitory goods, the sight and enjoying whereof is to them as food and life. Their wisdom also is from below, which is 'earthly,' making men covetous; and 'sensual,' making men delight in beastly pleasures; and 'devilish,' full of craft, fraud, wicked policy, and subtle devices, James iii. 15. This wisdom below followeth the things of this world, even the lusts of the eyes, which are earthly; the lusts of the flesh, which are sensual; and pride of life, which is devilish. Therefore let us hereby try our worldliness, and whether we be such as worldlings be; the signs whereof be these: first, when we are more moved to do anything for profit and gain than for the commandment of God, or charity, or any other motive by which the godly are drawn on to do that which they should do. Secondly, when our hearts are wholly set upon the world, minding altogether earthly things, which sheweth that there is our treasure, because our hearts be there. Thirdly, when we grow more covetous as riches increase, setting our hearts upon them, Isa. xxxii. 6. Fourthly, when we speak like worldlings, who can utter their thoughts freely in these earthly matters, but are in spiritual matters very blockish, if not senseless. Fifthly, when we be not liberal-minded, for a liberal person is set against the niggard and churl, Isa. xxxii. 5, who is called in Hebrew *nabal*, a fool, for so is the covetous worldling; also *kelai*, of a word (כלה) which signifieth to consume, for that he wasteth himself in the world and for the world. By circumlocution he is said to be one 'greedy of gain,' Prov. i. 19, one that loveth silver, and abundance, and is not satisfied, Eccles. v. 10. The Grecians calleth him φιλάργυρος, *philarguros*, one that loveth money, Luke xvi. 14, and πλεονέκτης, *pleonectes*, one that would have more, never contented; and therefore to be covetous and contented are put as contraries, Heb. xiii., the one being forbidden, and the other commanded. This is the worldling. Secondly, note that an honest man dealeth plainly and not covertly with others in these worldly businesses. Boaz concealeth not the commodity which the kinsman might reap in marrying of Ruth; he propoundeth not her, and concealeth this; for an honest man hateth fraud and deceit; he doth to others as he would that they should do to him. If, therefore, we would be held honest, let us deal uprightly and plainly with others with whom we have to do; for it is sincerity, it maketh a man's word of credit, and bringeth him into the reputation of an honest man; and let this be remembered, that fraud and deceit God will certainly avenge, 1 Thes. iv. Thirdly, note that albeit man may not deceive his brother, yet is he to proceed wisely, to use prudence and discretion in his affairs; as knowing what to speak first, what next; for there is time for all things, as Solomon saith, so in this also. And it is no fraud to utter one thing before another, and so to speak truly, to further the matter in hand; to conceal also a thing for a time, so it be with no ill intent, not to deceive, or hurt my brother any way, it is not to be condemned, but rather to be allowed, as a point of wisdom and prudence in a man, and therefore may it be observed honestly and justly, without stain or crack of credit.

*Saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people.* Both the elders and people were gathered together, as we may here see, and in verses 9, 11. Here the inhabitants are named before the elders; in the 9th verse the elders before them, and in verse 11 these before the elders again, as shewing how one dependeth upon the other, the elders upon the people, and the people on them by mutual relation, one assisting another, the officers the people, by their power and authority, and the people these by aid and help, as they should be commanded, which is peaceable happiness in a commonwealth. In that they be called Boaz his people, it sheweth the greatness of this man's power in Bethlehem, as lord and chief governor there, of whose greatness I have spoken before. He doth here bring this matter thus into the public assembly, for that it was public, for more peaceable proceeding, for better assurance, ratification, and confirmation of the business, when it should be concluded there before such elders and so great assembly of people. Lastly, because it was to be finished in the gate of the city, by the law of Moses, Deut. xxv. 7, 8; so it was not done in vain glory, or from an high spirit, but for that reason and necessity so required. Matters of importance are so to be handled for place and person, as may best serve to end the same peaceably, without farther ado, if it may be.

*If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it.* Boaz doth not urge him, but leaveth him to his choice; he telleth him of the land, but urgeth him not with the law, because he did not much care whether the kinsman would redeem it or no, having a desire to match with Ruth himself. Whence we may observe, that there a thing is rather propounded than heartily urged where the mind is not bent to have it effected; that we usually leave to men's choice which we are very indifferent in, not much caring whether it be or be not. So do many preach, propounding the doctrine of godliness rather than earnestly urging the same, because they be indifferent towards their hearers, not much caring whether they serve God or no. By this may the hearty affection or coldness in a cause be judged of. Here note by the way how the kinsman the redeemer was a type of Christ, Isa. lix. 20, who became, by taking our nature upon him, our brother and Redeemer, who redeemeth us, first, from sin, Titus ii. 14, from a vain conversation, 1 Pet. i. 18, that we might be a peculiar

people to God, zealous of good works; secondly, from our enemies, Luke i. 74, 75, that we might serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life; thirdly, from under the law, Gal. iv. 5, that we might receive the adoption of sons; fourthly, from the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13, 14, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit; fifthly, from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10, and so to give us the inheritance of life and glory.

*But if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know.* Note, first, that a man is either to perform his duty, or to render up his right to another that will, for else he is as the tree which keepeth the ground barren, Luke xiii., and good for nothing but to be cut down and cast into the fire. A good lesson to idle and negligent ministers, who should either take pains to teach, or yield up their places to such as would; else let them look for the end of the unfruitful tree, and the reward of the unprofitable, wicked, and slothful servant, which was cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, Mat. xxv. 30; secondly, that one man knoweth not the mind of another till it be revealed and made known unto him, as Boaz acknowledgeth here, and as the apostle teacheth, 1 Cor. ii. 11, and Solomon also, Prov. xx. 27, and therefore are we to be charitable in censuring men's hearts, when we know not the intent thereof till it be revealed, as by words, for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; or by works, for, as our Saviour saith, 'By their works you shall know them;' or by signs and tokens, by looks and gesture, for where the eyes be lofty, the heart is haughty, Ps. xiii. i. 1, and ci. 5, and the gesture stately, the mind is great. Thus may we judge of the mind and heart; for by words, works, and gesture may they be known, and 'their countenance,' saith Isaiah, chap. iii. 9, 16, 'doth witness against them.' And therefore should we look to these, and strive to have an outward carriage comely and decent as befitteth Christians, if we would not have the inward man censured and thought evil of.

*For there is none to redeem it besides thee.* The reason why he advertiseth the kinsman; for that he was the next, if the other refused, and the other had the right before him. An honest and just-dealing man will not enter upon another man's right without his leave, and first acquainting him therewith; for otherwise wrong should be offered to him, which an honest man is loath to do, love bringing him to do better unto his neighbour, as we see by Boaz here; whose example let us be willing to follow, as we would be accounted just and honest. Again note, that in the sale of land, he is to have the first offer, who hath a right thereto after the present possessor, before another, if such a one be able and willing to buy the same, if either the law would make him heir, or the bond of natural love should persuade thereto. In so doing, an even course is kept, love is observed, houses and families are upheld, when that which belonged to a family or kindred is kept among themselves, and not alienated unto another house or stock; which, therefore, for men's outward name, and better strengthening of their family, is fit to be observed.

*And I am after thee.* As if he had said, I rather than any other propound this unto thee, because, if thou wilt not do thy duty, I will, being the next kinsman. They are most fit to put others in mind of their duty, which have a more special reason and calling thereto than others, and a mind and ability to perform what others do neglect; for where these concur, as they did in Boaz, the party admonishing cannot justly be excepted against. And therefore let us look whether we, in going to urge others to their duties, have a calling by special reason so to do, else may we be condemned for too busybodies; likewise, whether we have a conscience in ourselves, that we be not guilty of unwillingness to do our duty in that which we press others unto, lest it be said to us, 'Physician, heal thyself.'

*And he said, I will redeem it.* This sheweth that he was a worldling, for his kinsman, after so long a famine, had ready money to purchase, but not a penny to give to poor Naomi and Ruth, as Boaz did. Boaz was rich, and had wherewith to redeem the inheritance, but he was merciful. So he was a rich man *in* the world, but not *of* it, as a worldling is; for a worldling is one of the world, loving it, seeking it with greediness, hoarding up, and ready ever to be buying, but without mercy to the poor, as this kinsman seemed to be. By this learn to behold a worldling, and a godly rich man, both getters, both full of coin, both ready to purchase; herein they differ not; but the one hath regard to the law of God, so not the other; one hath a merciful heart to be liberal to the poor, and so hath not the other; the one in his purchase hath respect to the good of his brother, the other regards wholly and only his own commodity; for he is unsatiable, being like the dry sandy ground which drinks up rain; like the dropsy, the horse-leech, the grave, and barren womb, which be never satisfied. No more is the covetous worldling; his increasing and getting satisfieth him not, but rather maketh him the more greedy of gain. Which miserable corruption is much to be bewailed, and happy contentment is to be sought after, as the apostle exhorteth, Heb. xiii. 5.

Ver. 5. *Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.*

Boaz propoundeth now the thing principally intended. In which may be noted, when it was spoken of, what, and the end why.

*Then said Boaz.* When he saw him forward to buy the land, and as one prepared thereby, in his understanding, to have the offer of Ruth made to him, then

he propounded her, teaching this, that then a matter is fit to be spoken of, when the party may seem to be prepared thereunto; and this is wisdom both concerning spiritual and corporal things. Thus may we see how Boaz did here; so the wise woman of Tekoah did to David, 2 Sam. xiv.; and in like sort Nathan to David, the prophet to Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 39, 40, 42; and thus did Joseph prepare his brethren, before he discovered himself to them. And in this manner doth God in shewing his will to us. He prepared his people in giving the law, Exod. xix.; and John Baptist must prepare the way before Christ come with the gospel; and so must Paul be prepared with humiliation, before the Lord tell him his good pleasure, and put him into his function to carry his name unto the Gentiles, Acts ix. And thus did Peter, before he propounded the choosing of Matthias, and the word of glad tidings to the Jews, Acts i. and ii., for in doing this, we may greatly further what we do intend. And therefore let us learn this wisdom, to put it also into practice.

*What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess.* The reason of this speech of buying first of Naomi, then of Ruth, is this: Naomi was Elimelech's widow, to whom the land did belong, and whom the kinsman should have married; but seeing she was too old to marry, and to bear children; and now Ruth young, and the widow of one of Naomi her sons, she was to supply Naomi her defect; and she, when the land was to be redeemed, must also be married to the kinsman, albeit she was a Moabitess; for God's law was not partial, but extended in Israel, in that case for which the law was given, to the woman, whether she were an Israelitess, or of another nation, and married to an Israelite. Note here, that Boaz at the first propounded not so much as he intended; yea, what is principally intended is often last propounded, as here, or wholly concealed, usual with statists; as we may see in Saul, who propounded the marriage of his daughter to David, as if he honoured and loved him, when the end of his policy was to destroy him, 1 Sam. xviii. 9, 17, 21, 25. Jeroboam propoundeth tranquillity and rest to Israel, and that he had care to save them from so great cost and trouble, as to go up to Jerusalem there to worship; he would, for their ease, have them to worship at Dan and Bethel the golden calves; but this their fleshly ease, effected by this devilish policy, was not intended, but the safety of himself, and the confirming of the kingdom to himself, of which yet in the end he was deceived, 1 Kings xii. 26, 27. Seeing that less is at first propounded sometime than intended, and the main thing now and then concealed, as these examples shew, and as we may see it in the serpent, that grand politician, unto Eve; let men learn to be wise to sift the drift, if they have to do with men of wisdom and of a deep reach; else avoid them, if their own apprehension be too shallow to conceive them, lest by credulity they be overthrown. But it may here be asked, seeing Boaz did propound not that which at the first he chiefly aimed at, whether it be lawful so to do? I answer, Yes; for to propound one thing before another is not evil, neither to conceal sometime part of our mind, as we may see in Samuel, so advised by God himself to speak, 1 Sam. xvi. 2, yea, that may be sometime spoken, and in some case, which may seem to further a thing in hand, and yet be the way to prevent, and tend to the welfare of another, as the counsel of Hushai to Absalom, 2 Sam. xvii., which counsel was not to overthrow Absalom, though by God's hand it fell out so, but to provide for the safety of David, and to cross the counsel of Ahithophel, which tended to the utter destruction of David, the Lord's anointed; which was honest and godly policy, in which no evil but good was intended of Hushai his part, which differs much from the damnable policy of Saul and Jeroboam, which subtle men most commonly follow and put in practice. We may also observe here maintenance for Naomi, and marriage for Ruth, so as both the widows were cared for; for of widows God hath ever had an especial care, Exod. xxii. 22, 23. To a widow must Elijah go to preserve both his own and her life, 1 Kings xvii.; for a widow must Elisha work a miracle to discharge her debts, 2 Kings iv. 1, that she and her children also may live. For widows left childless, a law was made for their marriage, Deut. xxv., and maintenance allowed for such, if she were a priest's daughter, when she returned to her father's house, Lev. xx. 13. And therefore let men have respect to the widows, as James exhorteth, chap. i. 27, who maketh it a chief sign or character of our religion before God.

*The wife of the dead.* This sheweth how Ruth came to have a right in an Israelite to marry with him, because her husband was an Israelite; and the law was, that the widow of such a one the next kinsman should marry, if he died without issue. But yet this is not all, for Orpah was the wife of the dead too; she was married to Chilion, brother to Mahlon; but Ruth's religion, and coming with Naomi to dwell among God's people, give her this benefit of God's law. By which we may learn that religion, and not any earthly privilege, doth interest us into the law of God and the benefit thereof; for otherwise Orpah had as much right by the law to the kinsman and to Boaz as Ruth had. If, therefore, we claim a benefit by the word, let us be religious; for godliness hath the promise of this life, and the life to come; but unto the wicked no hope, so long as they so remain, but to them the threatenings and curses be due.

*To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.* This was Moses's law, Deut. xxv. 5, and ordained for divers causes: first, to shew that by death the right of inheritance was not lost, for it is called *his* inheritance, which figured out this, that by death we lose not our right of heaven, which is called our inheritance; secondly, to provide that the widow

should not be without children, thereby typing or figuring unto us, that the church should not be left barren; thirdly, to make the dead to live again, and his name to remain among such as were in the land of the living, so teaching that the dead should rise, and enjoy life everlasting; fourthly, to preserve the name of the dead, Deut. xxv. 6, that it should not be put out, so giving us to know, that God keepeth our names in remembrance, and we shall not perish; fifthly and lastly, to preserve the honour of the first born, when he that was begotten by the kinsman, was to bear the name of the dead, and not his name which begot him; so God would teach us, that Christ, the first begotten, should be honoured, and such as were begotten by spiritual fathers, the ministers of the word, should carry Christ's name, and from him be called Christians, and not by the name of their teachers, as if they begot people to themselves, but only to Christ, to keep up his name amongst his saints for ever. Besides these ends, and this typical and figurative meaning, we may observe that, by Moses's law, kindred were to uphold the name of their house, that it perished not; for it was a great curse to have a man's name rooted out, Ps. cix. 13, Jer. xxii. 30. And though that law do not bind us, yet the law of natural love, and loving respect to our own kindred, the name and credit of those which we come of, yea, and the honour which our family may come unto by obtaining antiquity, should make us uphold it; for ancient families have a certain honour upon them for antiquity's sake, though otherwise but poor and mean. Now, to keep up a name, and that in good credit, we must observe and fulfil these things: First, plant religion, and keep that among us, for so God will uphold and strengthen us, and bless us and ours: 'The godly shall be had in an everlasting remembrance, but the name of the wicked shall rot.' Secondly, bring up our children, and so teach them to bring up theirs, in honest courses and callings, and not to let them live idly and vainly; for nothing prevents evil more, nor upholds a man's estate better, than to live with industry and diligence in a calling; and what overthroweth houses, and bringeth men to ruin, making gallants to sell away their inheritances, but that they have been idly brought up, without callings, without honest employments? Thirdly, keep our genealogies, from our ancestors, and the increase of our posterities, to behold therein the Lord's blessing, and to rejoice in our increasing the Lord's church. Fourthly, we must help them up again, which by God's hand fall into decay. Common charity and natural love do persuade hereunto, and our own credit also, in keeping our name from contempt, if that respect may move us; for the more poor, the less esteem, and the greater contempt. Fifthly, we must labour to prefer our kindred to good marriages, to good places, as they shall be fit, and occasions offered, as far forth as we shall be able to the utmost. Sixthly, we must love one another entirely; which shall appear, first, by our inquiring after one another, when we be separated; secondly, by visiting one another near, and sending one to another further off; thirdly, by being glad to see any of them, though descended many degrees from us: for the further off, the better appeareth the antiquity of our kindred, and the greater increase of our house; fourthly, by being desirous that one should make use of another before any other whatsoever, for this combineth them very nearly in affection; fifthly and lastly, to defend them in their just causes, and to be as one man to preserve them from wrongs and injuries offered them unjustly. This do, but yet only as far as may stand with public peace, for that must be preferred before kindred, yea, and our own estate and lives, lest we run into factions and partakings, and so cause civil dissension, which must be most carefully avoided; but otherwise, being no breach of public peace, no wreck of conscience, nothing against justice and legal proceedings, we must defend them, and in their good courses uphold them in love and charity. If every house and family would do thus, should not men be happy? should not every one rest in peace under his own vine? The rich friends would supply the want of their poor kindred, and the poor would honour them, and lay down their lives for them. Charity would rule as queen; and justice would sit in peace; religion would flourish, and the land would be blessed, and people made renowned, admired and feared. Before I end this verse, here it may be asked, Whether the law of Moses, Deut. xxv. 5, mentioning a brother, be to be understood of natural brethren, or only, as the Hebrews use to understand brother, a near kinsman, and not a natural brother?

*Ans.* It is to be understood of a natural brother, for the law was in use before it was written, Gen. xxxviii. 17, 18, and so then understood by Judah and Tamar, God dispensing therewith; and Naomi thus understood it also, chap. i. 13, though, if there be no brother, the nighest kinsman then must marry the widow. Therefore Ruth claimed it of Boaz, and Boaz did propound it to the nearer kinsman. Besides these, learned men do take the law to be so meant.

Ver. 6. *And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance; redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.*

The kinsman's answer to Boaz concerning his propounding of Ruth to him. He refuseth her, and giveth his reason; then he resigneth his right to Boaz, and repeateth again the words of refusal as a reason of his resignation.

*And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself.* He could before redeem it, but now he saith he cannot. He loved the land, and in that respect he was ready to fulfil the law; but he cared not for the woman, the poor widow, and in this regard the law was not respected of him. So we see how that worldlings are partial obser-

vers of God's law: some part they take and some part they leave, even as it liketh them; they look to the bare letter, but not the spiritual meaning; they shun the act, but for words and thoughts they do take no care; the sins in the grossest kind they avoid, but the lesser, as they account them, they make little or no conscience of; that which concerneth their pleasure and their profit according to the law they are ready to do, but, on the contrary, where the law crosseth them, that they cast behind them, as this kinsman here; they hate popish fasts, but love drunken feasts; they abhor superstitious worship and cost about it, but they can be content to live off sacrilege and the maintenance due to ministers, though given by ancestors to the church, with an execration or curse upon such as shall change them to any other use. Other men's duties they can hear of, and urge the law to them, but to be told of their own, and pressed to the performance thereof, they cannot endure. The reasons of this partiality are these: First, the want of the true love of God, and reverent fear of the power and authority of the lawgiver; for where this love and fear is, there will be respect had to all the commandments, without partiality, as we may see in David, Ps. cxix. 6, and in other holy men of God. Secondly, the unbridled lust of man unsubdued, and not brought into the obedience of Christ by the power of the word, as St Paul speaketh, 2 Cor. x. 5; for if the word ruled in their hearts, they would not be thus partial in obeying God's will, but be like Zacharias and Elizabeth, 'walking in all the commandments of God unblameable,' Luke i. 6. Thirdly, their love of pleasure and worldly profit more than God himself, which appeareth by this, that they will lose neither of these for religion's sake. Herod will do many things, but his pleasure with Herodias he will not forego. Ananias and Sapphira will give much, sell all to give to the church, but not give all; they will think more of the matter than give away all at once, though still they will pretend it. Such Herod-like and such Ananiases there be, which have not denied their pleasures nor their profits for religion's sake, which therefore maketh them partial in their obedience to God. Fourthly, the love of praises of men, John xii. 42, 43, and fear of them, make them to make baulks in their service to God, now omitting this, then that, and here trespassing, and there offending against the law; to get this man's praise, and not to displease that; being bound only to man, but loose in their hearts to follow their own wills in respect of any conscience towards God. Fifthly, the deadness and benumbedness of their consciences (for want of looking into God's law, and the searching out of their ways by the same), which never troubles them for neglect of their duties, nor for the breach of any part of the law. Sixthly, a carnal persuasion of their good estate, and that in thus doing they be not so much to blame. Because they thrive in the world, they get many friends, and they see others also to be their companions with them herein of the best rank in the world, and such as profess to be better, yet are taken tardy in foul faults; and therefore are they hardened hereby in this their halting service and partial obedience to God. Let us take knowledge of this to bewail it, then to remove these causes, and to labour for the contrary graces, that we may serve God with all our hearts. Note again how he saith, *I cannot*, when he might have said, *I will not;* but hence we see that what man will not do, that he excuseth with *I cannot do*. So did the high priests and elders answer our Saviour, saying they could not tell, Mat. xxi. 27, when indeed they would not tell him what they thought of John's baptism; for *I cannot* is a more modest speech than *I will not*, and it carrieth a reasonable excuse with it; for in reason we think that what a man cannot do he should not be urged to do, and therefore do men use to say they cannot do that which they have no will to do, either of a froward spirit, which is to be condemned, or upon respect of some inconveniences, which may in some sort be excused with *I cannot do*, to wit, with conveniency; but this must not excuse or hinder our duty of charity, to neglect the helping of our brother in this his necessity, or to omit to do what we ought or may well do; for so to say *I cannot* is untruth and an evil excuse.

*Lest I mar mine own inheritance.* Thus this kinsman excuseth his refusal of Ruth. He might think, perhaps, being a worldling, that he might mar it if he married a young woman, and so be overcharged with children, or that in marrying Ruth he should be burdened with poor Naomi; or he having children by another, should by this bring a new charge upon him, and occasion discord by children of divers women, which seldom agree, as may be seen in Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob's sons; or he might have another wife (as upon this place some do note), and so by taking this the house might be filled with contention, as we may see when Abraham took Hagar to Sarah, also in the wives of Jacob, Elkanah his two wives, and as is very like between the wives of Lamech, the first bigamist; or lastly, he might think, having a good inheritance of his own, by taking Ruth, and begetting a son to the dead, and so perhaps having no more, should thereby raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, and want one for his own, which he would not so mar, as he saith, whatsoever his thought was, thus to move him to speak. We may learn that a worldling is careful to preserve his outward estate, that it be not marred, as he here speaketh, for such a one is wise in his generation; he loveth his riches and wealth, and he feareth want, and it is not amiss to care to get honestly and to preserve our lands and goods when we have them, for they are God's gift, and we are made his stewards over them, to keep them carefully and to employ them according to his will, and not after his lusts; yea, this we are commanded to do, and urged by Solomon thereto by many reasons, Prov. xxvii. 23–27. This care had Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14, and Naboth, 1 Kings xxi.; and the apostle telleth us that every one is to provide for his family, 1 Tim. v. 8, as the

good housewife doth, Prov. xxxi.; and parents are to lay up for their children, 1 Cor. xii., which they cannot do except they be painful, frugal, and do care to uphold their estates, and therefore thus far a worldling is not to be reproved; but as far forth as he careth for the world with neglect of religion in himself and in his family (whenas first we must seek God's kingdom, as Christ commandeth, Mat. vi. 33, and that in the first and not in the last place), and as far as he keepeth it with shipwreck of conscience, upholding it by ill means, and having no care to do good works; which two, that is, the neglect of God's service and of keeping of a good conscience, if they be avoided, men may in the care of their outward estate be well warranted to keep and prefer God's blessings bestowed upon them, ever in faith to God and love to our brethren; for, with all care we ought most of all to uphold our spiritual estate, that we mar not that and lose our hope of heaven, but let the care of the one put us in mind of the care of the other, as every way more excellent. Note farther from this man, that worldlings think by obeying God's law they shall mar their earthly estate, that religion will overthrow them; and thus they imagine, first, because they see God's word to cross their worldly courses, whereby they do use to get and uphold their estate, which indeed cannot stand with religion pure and undefiled before God. Secondly, because they are persuaded that they must do as men of the world do, else they shall not thrive, howsoever religion itself binds them to the contrary. Thirdly, because they trust not God, nor rely upon his word. Fourthly, for that they see many which go for religious men to be poor, and not to thrive as they do, or desire to do in the world, which they impute to their overstrictness in religion, and therefore do conclude with themselves that to live after the rule of God's word is the next way to beggary, which they will by their worldly courses prevent if they can. But let us beware of such atheistical thoughts, and be far from these imaginations of worldlings, first, because riches are from God, Deut. viii. 18, and not by man; man cannot make himself rich by any means if God's common blessing be not assistant thereto. Experience also teacheth us this: when we see men industrious, yea, provident and wise as others, yet can they not attain the half that others come to. Secondly, because these outward blessings, even these are promised to such as do live well and obey God, Deut. xxviii. Thirdly, for that many men in living carefully to please God and to serve him, have come to great wealth, as we may read of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Boaz here, David, Jehoshaphat, and many others. Fourthly and lastly, for that men by their rebellion against God have lost great estates, and deprived themselves thereof, and their posterity, by their wickedness, as is evident in the example of Saul, Jeroboam, and others. And therefore let us not think our worldly estate to become worse by careful living after God's laws, but rather better and more sure, as Job's was, about whom the Lord made a hedge for his safety. And remember for a conclusion, that such as fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good. 'O taste and see,' saith David, Ps. xxxiv. 8–10, 'that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him! The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' Note thirdly hence from these words of the kinsman, that the fear of worldly loss in a man's outward estate maketh him neglect the law of God, as this man doth here; for God's word prevaileth not; it hath not a commanding power over the conscience of a covetous man, because his heart is glued to his riches, Luke xviii. 22, 23; a base fear through unbelief possesseth him that he himself may come to want, and the love of riches so betwitcheth him as he valueth them above the Lord's precepts, contrary to David's account of God's word, Ps. cxix. 72, 103, 111, and xix. 9. That we may become, therefore, obedient to God's law, let us cast off this atheistical and heathenish fear.

*Redeem thou my right to thyself.* The kinsman is here willing that Boaz should take his right; that which before he said he would redeem himself, now he is contented that another should redeem it. So worldlings are content to yield sometimes their right unto others, as, namely, that which they cannot come by, that which they cannot keep, that which they cannot have but with more cost than the thing is worth; or when by getting a little there is hazard to lose much, and likewise that which for present fear they yield unto, as Benhadad did restore cities unto Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 34, because he was in his hand, and in peril of his life, which he would by that means redeem. Otherwise, worldlings willingly forego nothing. Therefore their yielding of their right at any time upon the foresaid by-respect is not thanksworthy.

*For I cannot redeem it.* None but can pretend some excuse or other why they do not what they ought. In this man may we observe two things, inconstancy and want of charity, for before he would redeem it, now he will not; before, yea; now, nay. Three things make men inconstant. First, levity of mind; this is a natural infirmity, and to be pardoned. Secondly, ignorance and want of foresight of the inconveniences, which maketh him rash at first and to repent afterwards, and so to change his mind, as this kinsman doth. This is somewhat excusable, though not altogether without blame, for a man is to do that which is gone out of his mouth, though it be to his own hindrance, Ps. xv., if nothing else hinder the performance. Thirdly, dishonesty, which is when a man maketh no conscience of anything he saith or doth, but as he seeth advantage therein to himself; saying and gainsaying, doing and undoing as he seeth it to tend to his own profit. This is flat knavery, and justly to be condemned. Of this we must take serious know-

ledge, and bewail the first in us, prevent the second by good consideration and deliberation, and hate the last as detestable falsehood and dishonesty, not to be practised among Christians. Uncharitableness in this kinsman herein appeareth, that he hath no care of the name of the dead, nor respect unto the two poor widows, Naomi and Ruth. The land he loved and liked well, but the women he would have nothing to do with; he had a mind to enrich himself in worldly substance, but he had no will to shew mercy to the poor, for a worldling thinks himself born for himself, seeking his own good, but not the good of another, contrary to the true property of charity, 1 Cor. xiii. This uncharitableness must we take heed of, and abandon self-love, the true cause thereof, and labour for charity, the evidence of our faith in God and true union with our brethren in Christ.

Ver. 7. *Now this was the manner in former time in Israel, concerning redeeming, and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.*

These words are a declaration of a custom in Israel, and brought in here to shew the reason of the kinsman his drawing off his shoe in the verse following. In this note the antiquity of this custom; also, where, about what, to what end, what it was, and the ratification.

*Now this was the manner in former time.* It was no new device, but an old custom, though nowhere in Scripture mentioned before. In commending this custom from antiquity, we see that antiquity hath ever been of credit to commend a thing unto us. By this the prophet commendeth religion and worship of God to the people, Jer. vi. 16; and by this prevailed the scribes and pharisees with their traditions, by saying it was said of old, and done by the forefathers, Mat. vi., xv. Thus the papists seek to grace their superstition and will-worship, for that which is of old hath many approvers of all sorts, which maketh it to be of such estimation. Seeing this is so, let us learn to know true antiquity from counterfeit, the antiquity of truth, which is of God, and that of error, which is of the devil; and that which we find to be antiquity of truth, that to uphold, and to reject the other; so shall we approve of the truth of our religion as most ancient, and renounce popery as a new novelty, and a religion sprung up but of late. This should also make us to be wary, and to take good heed that we ascribe not the name of antiquity to anything but that which may be proved to be sound and orthodox, yea, albeit being a thing but indifferent, lest, if it be evil, we, by attributing antiquity thereunto, do credit and add confirmation unto it by speaking thereof as being ancient; and when we so inform others, when we approve of it, and practise it, and instruct, teach, and allow our children so to think and do, if the thing be good and of approved antiquity, it is well done so to speak and practise; but if evil, we do amiss in misleading others, by gracing any way such a thing with the credit of antiquity, whenas we rather should use all means to disannul and cancel the same.

*In Israel.* Old customs have prevailed amongst God's people, both civil and religious customs, John xviii. 39, and that both good and bad. Good the godly have observed, as did Joseph and Mary, Luke ii. 27, 42. Bad the people have followed, such as were and be addicted to the will of men, and to the examples of their forefathers, Jer. xliv., to great and learned men's practices, 2 Kings xvii. 34, 40, being led by their own bringing up to follow the opinion of the most, and not to be guided by the law and precepts of God. Thus were the high places kept up in Judea, the golden calves worshipped in Dan and Bethel; so popish customs having taken place, we find hard to be removed; and heathenish customs sometimes among the ignorant and vulgar people are kept and observed in divers things at some seasons of the year, of which in this clear light of the gospel Christians should be ashamed. Some customs are not to be condemned simply, but only in regard of the abuse; as for friends to meet and feast, to make a feast at weddings, Judges xiv. 10; to rejoice, to sing, to play on instruments, yea, sometime to dance, Jer. xxxi. 4, so it be that the Lord's-day be not profaned, nor made the appointed day for these things, as most commonly it hath been, Isa. lviii. 13, for that day is set apart for better ends and holy purposes; also, so that moderation be used herein, as in feasting, to avoid drunkenness and gluttony; in mirth, wanton songs, lascivious speeches, abuse of God's name and his word; and in dancing, the mixed companying of men and women, for in Israel the women danced together, Judges xi. 34 and xxi. 31, 1 Sam. xviii. 6, Jer. xxxi. 13, and the men alone. As for the other, it is an allurement to vanity and folly, as daily experience may teach them that impudently will gainsay the same. So, then, let us distinguish customs, and as they be good so use them; if otherwise, cut them off, and suffer not an ungodly custom to have any authority, or to be a law in thine heart, for ofttimes evil customs do overmaster good customs. Wherefore let Hagar be expelled, that the promised seed may have his right and place.

*Concerning redeeming, and concerning changing.* Of redeeming land, buying and selling, before hath been spoken. Here is mention of the exchange of one for another, as Ahab offered unto Naboth, in which, as in the other, equity is to be observed. These words brought in here shew about what matters this ancient custom was observed, namely, in and about matters of the world. In which they had their liberty, as we have now in these things, and not to be found fault with or disallowed; neither need men to have any scruple in using them, nor to call them into question,

when they see not therein any apparent impiety or gross superstition.

*For to confirm all things.* To wit, which was done or spoken touching the redemption or change. So here is the end of the ceremony for civil use, not for superstition. It was for confirmation and establishing of the right of one upon another, for custom is as a law binding one to another in that which is done according to that custom. It is good, therefore, to take heed how we settle a custom.

*A man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour.* This was the custom or the ceremony used according to the custom then in Israel about such things. Several countries have several customs. We deliver up our right by taking up a piece of earth, and do lay it upon the deed or writing when we give up our right in freehold; in some places by a straw in copyhold land; some pull off a glove. Here is plucking off a shoe, to signify by the shoe his right to the land, by plucking off his will to forego it, by giving it to his neighbour the resigning of his right, so as the ceremony lively setteth out the thing. But it will be asked, Why was a shoe used in this? It may be to note that the man acknowledgeth hereby that now he had no right to set his foot upon it without the leave of the other; according to that with us, no man having a right, without the owner's good will, so much as to walk over another man's ground; but if he will he may commence a suit against him *de pedibus ambulandis:* but such extremity is utterly void of charity, and to be hated among Christians.

*And this was a testimony in Israel.* This act made good the bargain of sale or exchange in Israel, for a common custom maketh sure a thing delivered according to that custom where it is of force and use. The practice of that custom shall testify against them, and confirm their deed, where that custom is in use, for many customs are in many places and do differ. Let therefore such a custom be carefully observed, and beware of the breach thereof.

Ver. 8. *Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee; so he drew off his shoe.*

This is a conclusion of the bargain between them. Shewing what the kinsman both spake and did, granting Boaz liberty to buy it, and observing the custom amongst them, to ratify the same in the resigning of his right.

*Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz.* That is, because he said he could not redeem it, he saith to Boaz, Buy thou it; and because the custom was so he drew off his shoe, for this word *therefore* hath reference to both clauses. Here is a worldly man, yet he dealeth in the resigning of his right very honestly, and so as by law and custom the same might be confirmed and made good to Boaz. Hereby we see that some men out of common honesty, being worldlings, will so pass away their right to another as it shall stand good by law to them, for they will observe in such things moral honesty. They love their credit before men, they care to preserve such just dealing for their more free commerce with others, and to prevent future troubles, which they might occasion otherwise by any trick of dishonesty when it should appear. This we find true by experience among ourselves, which is very praiseworthy, and a comdemning of such as pretend a greater show of piety, but have not half the honesty which some civil worldly men have; for if we pass an estate to any, why should we not make the purchase good to the utmost according to law? Honesty and equity require it at our hands, if we be not deceivers, as some be, who make sale of that which secretly they have conveyed to others before; which practice, yea, and every such like deceitful dealing, is very theft and damned villany.

*Buy it for thee.* Before the kinsman in verse 6 willeth Boaz to redeem it to himself, here he saith, Buy it; so that to redeem was to buy the inheritance, of which somewhat in the next verse.

*So he drew off his shoe.* Thus he observed the custom, to confirm the right unto Boaz. Two things are here done to put over his right: first, his word, and then his deed. One was not enough to convey it over unto Boaz, therefore both are conjoined. So doth the Lord deal with us in giving us a right in the eternal inheritance. He giveth first his word, then his deed, setting to his hand and seal to confirm his word, which internally is the Spirit and heavenly graces thereof, externally the sacraments; so that which is bought by Christ is conveyed unto us. God giveth us good assurance, as here the kinsman to Boaz. Good assurance is to be given and taken in passing of right from one to another, Gen. xxiii. 18, Jer. xxxii. 6–8. It is honesty on the one side, and wisdom on the other. And therefore herein let us be both honest and wise. But now for plucking off the shoe, we must know that we find it two ways used, religiously and civilly. Religiously, in reverence to God, as did Moses, Exod. iii. 5, and Joshua, chap. v. 15, in drawing near unto him, which signifieth the putting off of foul and carnal affections, and to draw near with a pure heart unto God; and in witness of great humility, as David did, 2 Sam. xv. 30, acknowledging a sensible feeling of the heavy hand of God, and his afflicted estate then, which by sin he had justly brought upon himself, Isa. xx. 2. Civilly, this plucking or putting off the shoe was, first, for conveniency to wash the feet; next, for confirmation of sale of land, as here; and, thirdly, for disgrace, when the kinsman would not perform the part of a kinsman according to the law of Moses, Deut. xxv. 9. This is not here meant; for by the law the woman, after she had claimed marriage of the kinsman privately, then also she complained to the magistrate. If the kinsman should refuse to do the office of a kinsman, then is she to pluck off his shoe, and spit in his face, which some expound to spit before his face.

But here is a voluntary plucking off of his own shoe, and also the former verse sheweth it to be a custom touching redeeming and changing; and thereupon the kinsman useth it to resign his right, and to confirm it unto Boaz, and not as an act of disgrace to himself, for not yielding to do the kinsman's part, which was not claimed at his hands by Ruth either privately or before authority; and therefore I take that this putting off the shoe, and that spoken of in the law of Moses, Deut. xxv., are not one and the same.

Ver. 9. *And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.*

Boaz here taketh witness of that which is done. The witnesses are the elders and the people; the matter which they are to be witnesses of is the sale of all the land of Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon, and the purchase thereof at Naomi her hand; the kinsman resigning his right to him, that he might buy it to himself.

*And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people.* Boaz esteemeth of the elders as men in authority; but yet he neglecteth not the people, whom also he calleth upon to be witnesses also. This was his wisdom, to procure love of all, as appeareth by their prayer made for him afterwards, ver. 11. Here in this verse, and the rest following, we may see the happy success of that which Boaz took in hand; for it was a good matter, for a good end, and done in a right manner. Now, when a thing which is lawful is taken in hand, and done well, to a right end, there may be expected a good issue; as may be seen in David's setting upon Goliath. It was an honourable attempt, the manner of his proceeding was lawful, he waited for it, and had public authority to set him forward, and the end was God's glory and safety of Israel; for God is with such, and his power shall assist them, and his favour shall give them good success, as he promiseth unto such. And therefore, if we would prosper, let us observe these things in our attempts; for if the end be good in thy intendment, and the thing unlawful, the act is sinful; if the matter be good, and the end sinister, this marreth the matter; but if the matter and end be as they should be, yet if the manner be amiss, we may for this miscarry, as we see in David's removing of the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 6, 1 Chron. xv. 13. This let us observe in coming to the word and sacrament, 1 Cor. xi.

*Ye are witnesses this day.* Boaz saith that they are witnesses, for that they saw and heard what was done at that time, in that assembly, between him and the kinsman; so as we see that what men come for, and are called to see and hear, that are they witnesses of; so saith he, and they also confess it in verse 11. By this may we know who to produce for fit witnesses in a matter, such as personally are seers and hearers of that which they testify; and as they be fit witnesses, so then are they sound and faithful, if they will truly and without respect of person affirm that for truth which they know to be so; for it is one thing to be a fit witness in respect of a man's knowledge, and another thing to be a faithful witness, to speak truly what he knoweth. Seeing what we see and hear maketh us fit to be produced for witnesses, when occasion shall serve, let us, in matters of moment, for upholding of truth, justice, and peace, observe well what we do see and hear, that we may be true and faithful witnesses, to maintain truth, justice, and peace, without all partiality.

*That I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's.* Here is shewed whereof they were witnesses; one thing is here specified, the other in the next verse. This here is of the purchase of land, whereunto he calleth them to be witnesses, for better confirmation of the land, and the right thereof to himself; for witnesses are for to establish a matter, Deut. xix. 15. So we see in Boaz a care to make sure the estate. A wise man will seek to make sure that which he purchaseth; as Abraham also did, Gen. xxiii., and Jeremiah, Jer. xxxii. 10, 11, 25, who had for confirmation of the land, first, the evidence drawn; then the same sealed; thirdly, the same done according to law and custom; and, lastly, before witnesses. Thus the Scripture commendeth unto us a care herein from these examples; it is wisdom and prudence to secure our estates in the best manner, so it be just and honest, for so shall we prevent future contentions which after might rise about it. And if ever men had cause to look about them in any age, now they have; for it may be said, as Jeremiah said in his time, chap. ix. 4, 'Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant.' Here may be noted Boaz his uprightness also, who desireth to have others to take notice of his doings, and to have that public which should be public; for an honest mind is desirous to be public where the matter requireth it, as in buying and selling of land, in the course of justice, in the ministry of the word, in solemnising of marriage, and such like. It argueth an honest intention, not caring who seeth it; it will clear him of the slander or suspicion of fraud and circumvention. And therefore in such cases labour to be public, for only they which do evil, or intend it, hate the light; honest minds care not who seeth them. It is no good sign of a good intent when buyers will mark* in secret to buy lands of others, of such as be young prodigals or old spendthrifts, or such as must sell for need; for those hope to make a prey, and to get that for a little which is worth much. But such gain is unjust; and where fraud and oppression is, there will God be an avenger, 1 Thes. iv. Lastly, note hence, that it is lawful for a rich man to buy

* That is, 'traffic,' hence 'market.'—ED.

land of others when it is offered, as here, whenas also need is of some parcel for a special use; as Abraham did buy a burying-place, Gen. xxiii.; and Omri, the hill of Samaria, 1 Kings xvi. 24; and when it is for good uses, Lev. xxvii. 22, as for the maintenance of God's public worship, to build an altar, as Jacob, Gen. xxxiii. 19, and David, 2 Sam. xxiv., did; so now to buy land for maintenance of the word, for schools of learning, for hospitals, and to set poor on work. Again, he may buy to help a poor man that for need must make sale to supply his want with money; but such a purchase must be made in mercy, in great equity, and without oppression, in the fear of God, Lev. xxv. 14–17, 25. And, thirdly, when the salesman is his kinsman, then to buy as a friend and kinsman, to preserve the land in their name, but especially to do the kinsman good; and that in two things, in giving to the utmost what it is worth, and in being ready at all times to let him redeem it again, if ever he shall be able. Thus may a rich-landed man buy land; but here he must take heed, first, that he entice not others to make sale of their estates which be not willing thereto, as Ahab did, 1 Kings xxi. 2, 4, which wrought that mischief which afterwards ensued. Secondly, that he make not a prey of a poor man, not of any other which standeth in need to sell, Lev. xxv. 14. Thirdly, that he buy not upon a greedy desire, and an insatiable covetousness, to have all about him; for the prophet denounceth a woe and judgments against such, Isa. v. 8–10. Fourthly, that he buy not in the days of a general calamity, but rather employ his money in works of mercy. This was a virtue in Nehemiah, chap. v. 16. They therefore err who think they may buy as much as they can if they have money, conceiving no other use thereof but to buy and purchase therewith only for themselves, to make themselves great. And this reproveth those which are so greedy of buying land, as they run into the usurers' books and borrow what they may to purchase, till the use of the money eat up a good part of the land, and themselves at the last become beggars, and so leave their children poor, their friends in bonds, and not a few lenders perhaps in the lurch. Such is the fruit of a greedy covetousness. But, we may say, as it is lawful to buy, so is it lawful to sell. True, of which before somewhat is spoken already, yet here a little more of the same matter. A man may sell to sustain his poverty happening by God's hand, as did the Egyptians, Gen. xlvii. 18, 20; to recover their livelihood and health, as did the diseased woman, Mark v. 25; to pay debts, as did the poor widow, 2 Kings iv. 7, to be free from bondage, and to save her life. For goods and lands are for our use; and liberty, life, health, and credit are more to be esteemed than any lands or possessions. A man may also sell to others for their need, as Ephron sold to Abraham a field, Gen. xxiii.; Hamor to Jacob, Gen. xxxiii.; and Araunah to David, 2 Sam. xxiv. And, thirdly, for to relieve the want of their brethren, as they did in the primitive church, Acts ii. 45, and iv. 36, 37, and v. 1. In such cases may men sell, but not to uphold prodigality, whoredom, idleness, pride and vanity.

*Of the hand of Naomi.* The right, it may seem, of all the lands of these three was in Naomi her hands, when they died childless. Thus the law left her well, as our law doth many widows now, and the love of kind husbands. But that too many widows wax wanton, and do, in following their lust and fantasy, overthrow themselves and their estates too. They follow not this holy and modest matron, who sought no marriage for herself in her old age (as some with us do, to their shame), but she had care for her beloved daughter-in-law, Ruth. If she had such lands to sell, may some say, why lived she so poorly, and suffered Ruth to go and glean, and live upon the alms of Boaz? Naomi had not the possession of these lands, being sold away before, but the right first to redeem, if she had been able, which she put over to Boaz, when the kinsman refused to redeem them, and so to help Ruth in her marriage.

Ver. 10. *Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.*

Boaz relateth the second thing of which they were to be witnesses, which was concerning his marriage; where note, first, with whom; secondly, how obtained; thirdly, to what end, is double; and fourthly, the calling of them again to witness it.

*Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess.* This was she whom he had promised to marry, and whom he now went about to make sure to him, though she were a Moabitess. Here it may be demanded, whether persons of diverse religions may marry together? *Ans.* If they be converted, they may. So Moses married Jethro's daughter, Salmon Rahab, and Boaz Ruth here, and Sheshan married his daughter to his servant, an Egyptian, 1 Chron. ii. 34;* but otherwise they may not. God forbade it his people, Deut. vii. 3; such matches were condemned, Ezra x., Neh. xiii.; the yoke is unequal, as St Paul speaketh, 2 Cor. vi. 14; it was reproved in Esau, and herein was he a grief unto his parents, Gen. xxvii. This is not to marry in the Lord; it is dangerous to the soul, if the heart should be drawn from God, as was Solomon's, 1 Kings xi. 1; and such matches hath God cursed, Neh. xiii. 26, Deut. iv. 7, as we may see in Jehoshaphat matching his son with Ahab's daughter, 2 Chron. xix. 2; it had almost rooted out his whole house, chap. xxi. 6, 13. Fathers and councils do condemn it, and therefore beware of making such matches.

*The wife of Mahlon.* See for this before, chap. i. 4,

* See Zipper. de Lege Mos. lib. 4, cap. xviii.

and in this chapter, verse the 5th, where Ruth is called the wife of the dead, and here shewed to be Mahlon, the elder brother to Chilion, the husband of Orpah, who by her apostasy lost her blessing in Israel, which Ruth obtained by her constancy.

*Have I purchased to be my wife.* We see hence a good man will be at cost to obtain a good wife. Abraham will send far a messenger to this purpose, Gen. xxiv., with camels loaden, and with jewels of silver and gold. Jacob will serve seven years, and seven too, but he will have Rachel, Hos. xii. 12, Gen. xxviii. and xxix. Boaz here will purchase a poor Ruth for her virtues; for indeed a virtuous woman's price is above rubies, she will do her husband good all his days, Prov. xxxi., she is worthy therefore the getting, and worthy to be honestly maintained; and yet we see most care least for such an one, but they will labour and spare no cost to get one that is fair, though beauty be deceitful vanity, Prov. xxxi. 30, and sometimes such a one is not over honest; or one rich, loving the portion better than the party, marrying basely and after living discontentedly; or for birth or friends, when the one lifteth up the heart with pride, and the other becometh chargeable. Beauty maketh not blessed, but virtue; not goods, but grace; not natural generation, but spiritual regeneration; no friends here, but the sweet favour of God, which he only affordeth unto the virtuous. See further from hence the love of Naomi to Ruth, who giveth her right to Boaz to redeem the land for advancement of Ruth; for loving parents will do much for the preferment of their children. Naomi here liveth unmarried, she doth all she may to get Ruth a good match for her own sake, and in love to the dead, that of her may be gotten one to bear the name of the dead, as Boaz speaketh in the words following. Which honest and loving care of Naomi checketh such widows as, being well left by the dead, do, either of covetousness and carelessness, neglect to marry their children, living only for themselves, or else of a wanton lust do cast themselves away upon such as will both undo them and their children.

*To raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.* Of these words somewhat is spoken before on verse the fifth, which I will not repeat. Here Boaz allegeth these words as a reason of his marrrying this young woman; they are the words of the law in Deuteronomy, chap. xxv. 6, 7, and so are the next following; to which law Boaz had respect in thus matching with Ruth, from whom we learn these things: First, that a wise man will prevent an offence, which by others might be taken at him, when he considers the occasion thereof; for Boaz telleth them the true ends of his marrying thus, lest the beholders and hearers should have censured ill of him, as of lechery, he being old and she young; or of folly, she being poor and he rich; she base, and he honourable; or of an inclining in her to idolatry, he being an Israelite, and she a daughter of Moab, of that race which enticed Israel to sin, and brought a great judgment upon the people, Num. xxv. And this he did for the care and credit of his name, which is highly to be esteemed, Eccles.vii. 1, Prov. xxxii. 1, and in love unto those there gathered before him, in whom he would prevent the offence, which on their behalf might be taken, though not on his part given. And thus must we learn to do, both to beware of offences to all sorts, 1 Cor. x. 32, Mat. xviii.; and also where we perceive that any might take an offence, there wisely to prevent it in them if we can, and not be like such as give themselves to all licentious liberty to live as they list, as almost every one doth in these days, not caring for a good name of a grave and sober Christian, or of adorning their holy profession, or of displeasing the godly minds of others; but to live only like libertines, after their own lusts, opening the mouths of the adversaries to speak ill of the gospel of God. Secondly, from Boaz we may learn, that a godly man in his marrying is guided by God's law, and hath respect unto God's good pleasure therein. So had Abraham in matching his son Isaac, and Isaac in marrying of his son Jacob; for such as be godly, make the Lord's will and word their rule in all things, much more in a matter of this weight and consequence. They know it to be God's ordinance, and therefore will advise with God about it; yea, they know that God hath not left men herein to their liberty and lust, to marry as they like best, but hath limited them, and in his word hath taught them with whom, how, and to what end to marry. And therefore in marrying we must be ruled by the Lord, which will appear by these things: If we see what calling we have to marry before we enter into this troublesome estate, as reason and religion should persuade us; if we see that we have a just cause to marry, then to consider with whom God alloweth us to marry; if we seek out such a one as not only with whom we may marry lawfully but also fitly; and therefore to pray earnestly to God for such a one, for God maketh fit matches, Gen. ii. and a virtuous woman is his gift. It is a happy thing to match fitly, and more hard than to match lawfully. If, lastly, we use marriage, as God hath appointed, for increase of posterity, Gen. ii., and to avoid fornication, 1 Cor. vii. (the first end was before the fall, the latter after), and withal for mutual society, help, and comfort, which one ought to have with another; which cannot be except there be fitness, grace, true love, humility, and patience. But who are thus led by the Lord in their marrying? Men seek wives now without any respect to God's will and pleasure; they follow the lust of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, and pride of life. Thirdly, we may observe how the virtuous are to match, so as they may raise up a seed of the righteous among God's people, for the preservation of the church and religion, as Boaz here had a care to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. But this cannot the married do, except

they themselves be true lovers of goodness, and have a special care to train up their children religiously, first, in knowledge of God, else are they atheists; of the true God, else heathenish idolaters; and of the true worship of this God, else but will-worshippers; then to inform them in the doctrine of faith, without which grace they can never profit by the word, nor ever please God, Heb. iv. 2, and xi. 6; the sum of which belief is set down in the articles of our creed. Next, to teach them how to pray aright, which is the means to confer with God, to speak to him, to obtain blessings from him, and without the practice whereof men are but as beasts, and a mark of such as think there is no God, Ps. xiv. The sum of our prayer, and the perfect rule of direction for matter, and manner, and end, is set down by our Saviour Christ. Lastly, to teach them obedience, and to walk in God's commandments, without which, all knowledge and faith is vain, 1 John ii. 4, James ii.; the sum of what we are to obey, is in the ten commandments, which children must be taught and instructed in. Here may be noted this also from the words, that the dead do live again, as it were in their posterity, which keep their inheritance; for children, and the preservation of their father's inheritance, do keep alive the name of the dead. Therefore let children have a care hereof, lest they destroy the name of the dead, as many prodigal children do.

*That the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren.* This is another end, the other being the means to prevent this, for the raising up of the name of the dead, preventeth the cutting of it off from among the brethren. Concerning the word *brethren*, hereby is meant others than very natural brethren; for the people of God before and under the law, as in the primitive church under the gospel, were wont to call one another brethren, of which I have spoken before out of the third verse. For *cutting off*. This may be when one will not marry to have children, or marrying are not blessed of God with children, or having children, are cut off by God's just judgment, and so the name perisheth, as it befell Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiv. 10; Ahab, 2 Kings ix. 8; Jehoiakim, Jer. xxii. 30, and xxxvi. 30; and as God doth threaten the obstinate sinner in Deuteronomy, chap. xxix. 18, 19. Howsoever this cutting off be of posterity, we may learn hence, that the decay of posterity is a cutting off of a man's name from among his brethren, as the words here and in the law imply, Deut. xxv. 6. And therefore let people pray for this blessing of marriage, and thank God for their posterity and fruit of the womb. Abraham most highly esteemed hereof, Gen. xv. 2; and the psalmist maketh a reward to such as fear God, Ps. cxxvii. 3, and cxxviii. 3; yea, children are a crown to the old men, and it was a heavy curse upon Jehoiakim to be made childless, Jer. xxxvi. 30, and xxii. 30; and it was threatened in the law as a punishment for sin, Lev. xx. 20. They be much to blame, then, which do marry of purpose with such as they think are past bearing of children, or with others apt for children, but yet in heart desire to have none, or perhaps but one or two, rather to dally with, than to be troubled with; but such children often prove a scourge to these parents, through their foolish affection and too great indulgency, because they have no more.

*And from the gate of his place.* These words shew that Elimelech was a man of authority among them, an elder and judge in the gate, which honour Boaz would uphold in marrying with Ruth, that his name might not be cut off from the place of authority, here understood by the gate. Good men seek to uphold the honour, and to preserve the dignity of one another, as the fifth commandment teacheth; which being our duty, we must care to observe, both to the dead and to the living. To the dead, as Boaz doth here. Now their honour we preserve when we speak of them with honour, as David did of Abner, 2 Sam. iii.; when we maintain their good name against calumnies and slanderous reports; and when we imitate their virtues, and seek to uphold their posterity, especially when they shall deserve well, and follow the steps of the dead in well-doing. Thus shall we truly and with praise preserve their honour, though we do not as the papists, dedicate days in honour of them, and make them intercessors to God for us, to the great dishonour of Christ. And as we should maintain the honour of the dead, so should we the honour of the living, by acknowledging their dignity, in age, place, and gifts, by speaking thereof, as is meet, without envy or disdain, and by doing reverence in our outward behaviour according to their dignity. Here may also be noted, that men of place and authority may soon leave their family in a low estate; for Elimelech's wife was poor Naomi, and glad of the help of her daughter-in-law's gleanings. How poor was the widow left, for whose relief the prophet Elisha wrought a miracle, 2 Kings iv., being, as is supposed by some, the wife of an honourable man, Obadiah, Ahab's steward, 1 Kings xviii. 3, who did feed an hundred prophets of God in caves, in the time of famine! This may fall out sometime by God's hand in punishing the fathers, that they can leave nothing to children; sometime for trial, as in Job's case, who was brought to great misery, and sometime a man's own doings may bring him under the power of authority, which may justly deprive him of his honour and estate, as it befell Abiathar in the days of Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 26, 27. Let not men be therefore proud of their parents' present glory; an alteration may soon come, as we see in Jeroboam and Baasha, in Ahab, Jehoram, and Jezebel; in Haman also, Athaliah, and others; for God's power, princes' authority, and a man's own way, may soon bring down his greatness, and also a ruin upon his whole house, Ps. lxxv. 6, 7.

*Ye are witnesses.* That is, as if Boaz had said, not only of the sale and purchase of the land, but also of this my marriage with this young woman Ruth, which here we see to be public, and in the gate of the city, in a civil court and place of justice. Whence note, first, that marriages are to be made publicly, before sufficient witnesses, as was Jacob's, this here, and that to which our Saviour was bidden, John ii. This is fit for the honour of marriage, for the better ratification thereof, and to prevent pretences of marriages; for if marriages were not public, but privately huddled up, some might pretend marriage, and live together as man and wife in show, and yet be but lewd livers; so others, weary of one another, might say they were not married, and so unlawfully separate themselves. Therefore let marriages be public, and in a public place, as here it was, and as now by our laws we be bound thereto; and avoid private making of marriages, and in corners, for they are often made in haste and end unhappily. Secondly, that marriage in old time was only a civil action; there was no need of a minister to make it, it was lawfully and sufficiently done, when it was made openly, by such as might marry, among the people, as we may see in the marriage of Isaac, of Jacob, Esau, Samson. Which confuteth the papists, that make marriage a sacrament, as if marriage were only lawful in the church, and not among the very heathen; when yet from the beginning it is common to all mankind, and allowed to all sorts. True it is, that we do make such marriages lawful only when ministers make them, but this is not with a papistical opinion of a sacrament, nor for that our church condemneth marriages otherwise made in other nations as unlawful, but the church and state have so ordained, for the greater reverence to God's ordinance, when his ministers shall bless the same, in the public congregation, with the prayers of the church; and when they shall teach them their duties, which do marry. Thus gracing God's holy ordinance by their praying and teaching, the one for benediction, the other for instruction, and therefore worthily ordained, and so of us to be religiously observed.

Ver. 11. *And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.*

The assembly make answer unto Boaz: first, acknowledging themselves to be witnesses, and then praying for a blessing upon the woman, and then upon him; that she may be lovely and fruitful, and he to do so worthily, that he may come to be renowned.

*And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said.* In so great a company (no doubt), differing in nature and conditions, yet we see here how they do all agree before Boaz to applaud him. May it be imagined that none had a by-thought, to see an old man to marry a young woman, one rich and noble to take a poor and mean maiden? Yet before him all say well unto it; for great men have to their faces great countenance and applause of the people in that they take in hand. The people will like all that David doth, 2 Sam. iii. 36; so will four hundred prophets allow of Ahab's purpose to go to battle against the Syrians, to recover Ramoth-Gilead; for people fear to offend, they desire to please their betters. And therefore this should teach those of place and wealth, upon whom many do depend, to take heed what they do, for they may set others on to godliness, and they may move others unto wickedness; they cannot fall themselves alone, but be like the great dragon, Rev. xii., with their tail pulling many down with them. Let David set up religion, multitudes will follow him to the house of God; let Jeroboam set up idols and devils, the Israelites will worship them; let Ahab worship Baal, all will do so; and let Jehu destroy him, and they will help him to do it. People are like a shadow, following authority; like wax also, which will take any print. In themselves are nothing, but allow and disallow, as they see great ones do before them. And therefore let no men of place regard their applause, thinking that well done which the vulgar approve, or flattering dependents; for they will not speak as the truth is, but to humour persons; not what they think to be right, but what they know another liketh of, and would have them say.

*We are witnesses.* That is, we acknowledge ourselves to be so as thou sayest; we are witnesses, and will upon any just occasion be ready to shew ourselves so. Whence note, that what men are called to witness, being either eye or ear witnesses thereof, or both, that should they be ready to testify, as these here profess themselves to be, and as did the Israelites, in the behalf of Samuel, before the Lord's anointed, 1 Sam. xii. 45. 'A faithful witness,' saith Solomon, 'will not lie.' And therefore let us in such a case be ready and faithful witnesses, for the truth sake, for justice and peace sake among our brethren. Many times ready and faithful witnesses prevent suits and keep peace, where otherwise there would be strife and contention. This reproveth those which, being able sufficiently to bear witness, yet for fear of displeasing will not; these want fervent love of the truth, and offend against the commandments, which bind men to preserve the dignity, life, chastity, goods, and good name of our neighbours. Now, if any of these be endangered, and we by our witness might set them free, and will not, we are guilty thereof. Again, this checketh, or rather condemneth, those that for favour will either add or detract in their witness-bearing, so seeking to please man, and to displease God, giving a deadly wound to their own consciences. Thirdly, such as do speak only what is done and said, but yet to another end and meaning than was intended, as

Doeg dealt with Ahimelech, and the false witnesses against Christ. These wicked persons sin against the commandments, Exod. xx., they trespass in one of the seven sins which God hateth, Prov. vi. 19, and are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xii. 22, who ordained in the law a punishment anwerable to that which by their false witness should have been inflicted upon another, Deut. xix. 16, 19. Such God threateneth to punish, Prov. xix. 9, for they offend greatly; they hinder the true course of justice, they deceive the judge, they hurt their neighbour, and they abuse the holy name of God, which they call to witness falsely. Let men therefore take heed hereof.

*The Lord make the woman.* Here they begin to pray for them, and all jointly together. Of praying to God I have before spoken. Here farther may be observed, first, that marriage is to be solemnized with prayer, and others are to pray for the married parties, as these do here; and Bethuel, Laban, and her mother, did for Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 60, and as our church ordaineth now at marriages; and that for these three causes: first, for the holiness of the action, being God's holy ordinance, and an honourable estate instituted in paradise, and in the time of innocency, and to be therefore undertaken holily and reverently, with supplication and prayer unto God; next, for the unholiness of our persons in ourselves, who by our corruption pollute the ordinance of God; and as we be of Adam's race, so have we our children conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, and beget such as be after our own likeness, Gen. v. We have cause then to pray, and that fervently, to God to bless and shew mercy unto us. And thirdly, for the troublesomeness of the estate of marriage, which may cause us to pray heartily, for it is full of temptations and trials. And therefore let it move us to pray for them, after the example of the people here and these elders; and not be like such as at the time of marriage only stand staring and looking on, or through vain thoughts do laugh and make a sport thereof, or else spend their thoughts upon the delight of future vanities, dancing, drinking, lewd songs and ribaldry, more heathenish than Christian-like. And if others are to pray for the married parties, then much more should they pray for themselves; but alas, how far are most from it, having their thoughts spent upon vanities! Secondly, note that in public prayer the assembly should be of one accord, as all these were here, both the elders and people, as also elsewhere, 2 Chron. v. 13, Neh. viii., Acts i. 14, and ii. 26, and iv. 24. This is unity, and the other confusion, when people are otherwise exercised than in giving their assent to that which is publicly performed.

*That is come into thine house.* That is either already come, or that certainly shall come, as if she were already in the house. This sheweth the cohabitation of man and wife, and that they are to dwell together, as Peter speaketh, 1 Peter iii. 7, 1 Cor. vii. 5; and God placed the first man and wife together in paradise, and Abraham and Sarah lived together; so did Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and his wives, and so did David with his, 2 Sam. vi. 20. And this is fit and necessary for mutual comfort and society; therefore the apostles took their wives with them, 1 Cor. ix. 5; and it is for this cause altogether a fault, when any wilfully live separated from their wives, or any unnecessarily without a calling, out of an idle levity, will become travellers into other countries after they be married; when the apostle warneth them not to defraud one another, except with consent, and that but for a time, and for this end to give themselves to fasting and prayer, and then come together again, lest Satan tempt them to incontinency.

*Like Rachel and Leah.* Rachel is first named, because she was Jacob's wife first by covenant, and his best beloved. Two wives he had; and it was and is lawful to have one wife after another, as Abraham had Keturah after Sarah; for they that cannot abstain, it is better to marry than to burn, 1 Cor. vii. 9, 36; and when the one is departed, the other is free to marry again in the Lord. And therefore it is an heretical opinion to forbid second marriages, which the godly practised, and the apostle alloweth upon good reasons. But to have two wives at once is not lawful, for it is contrary to the Lord's first institution of marriage, who joined together but one man and one woman, Gen. ii.; it is against the apostle's doctrine, who teacheth every man to have his own wife, and every woman her own husband, 1 Cor. vii. And we may read of the first offenders, how one was out of the church, a blasphemous Lamech, Gen. iv., and the other in the church, a profane Esau, chap. xxvi. 34. And albeit holy men had many wives, it was their fault, God only being pleased to pass it over in his mercy; but allow thereof he did not, as appeareth by the prophet Malachi's words, chap. ii. 15; and therefore are they not herein to be followed. It is a blessed law which of late time hath been enacted in this nation, against marrying two wives at once. In praying that Ruth might be first like Rachel, who was amiable and lovely to Jacob, and then like Leah, who was fruitful, they may seem to pray for two things of the Lord: the first was, that there might be true love and good liking between Boaz and Ruth, for true love and good liking ought to be between husband and wife; specially so commanded, Eph. v. 25, Col. vi. 19, so practised by Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 67, and by Elkanah, 1 Sam. i. 5, and other godly men; and it is that which maketh marriage comfortable, and the parties to live quietly together with mutual contentment. Oh, therefore, let us pray for this love, and not only pray, but endeavour to use the best means to procure and hold it. And to effect this, the married persons are to take heed of strange affections, which might alienate their minds one from another; then to behold rather the good qualities and virtues of one another than the infirmities and

things to be found fault with, for love covereth a multitude of offences. Young persons before marriage cannot see one another's faults, and if they do see them, yet their love is such as they can pass them by. Why, is not love in marriage as strong, nay, stronger, seeing now two are made one? Isaac took Rebekah, and she was his wife, and he then loved her; but now men love their Rebekahs afore marriage, and then, taking them for wives, they hate them, or not love them as before. Moreover, the married parties are to be ready to perform mutual duties cheerfully; yea, they are to strive which should be most loving in their duties of love, and should also provoke one another thereto. Lastly, they should often think of the solemn covenant made betwixt them, and by that and other godly reasons press themselves, the husband himself, and the wife herself, to their duties; yea, they should bewail their own and one another's corruptions before God, and pray against them, and for God's good graces to make them dutifully loving one to another. Thus doing shall they, by God's blessing, both procure and keep love. The second thing they prayed for was, the increase of children, which was the first blessing to man and woman, when God had made them, Gen. i. 28, and the first and principal end of marriage, and which God promised unto his people, Zech. viii. 5, Gen. ix. 1. In old time it was held a reproach for women to be barren, Luke i. 25, 1 Sam. i. 26, and the Lord did threaten it as a punishment, Lev. xx. 20, Jer. xxii. 30; yea, and inflicted it upon some, Gen. xx. 18, 2 Sam. vi. 23. Surely it is the want of a blessing, as the psalmist teacheth, Ps. cxxvii. and cxxviii. And, therefore, let us pray for this blessing, as Abraham did, Isaac, Manoah, and Hannah, from which these are far who so marry, as they might be without hope of children; such also as murmur at God's blessing through unbelief, fearing not to have to maintain them, unlike Leah, who comforted herself and praised God for children, Gen. xxix. 32, 35. Some would have some one or two, as it were to play withal, or to inherit that they have, but many they cannot away with; but these are most to be condemned who use means and medicines to prevent children, or sin in the sin of Onan, whom the Lord slew, Gen. xxxviii. 9, for it is murder before the Lord. Lastly, from the prayer made to the Lord for love between them and the increase of children, we may observe two other things: first, that love between man and wife cometh of God, and is his gift; for, as the psalmist saith, It is God that maketh them that are in one house to be of one mind; and therefore we ought to pray to him for it, and where it is, to praise him heartily for the same; then, that children are the gift of God, as may appear by many scriptures, and by the prayers made to God for them, Ps. cvii. 38, and cxxvii., and cxxviii, Gen. xx. 18, and xxix. 31, and iv. 1, and xxix. 35. And therefore must we acknowledge them from God, as Eve did, and Leah; if we want them, pray to him for them, as Hannah and others did, and then care to bring them up well, and dedicate them to God's service in some lawful calling, in thankfulness for his so great a mercy.

*Which two did build the house of Israel.* That is, God made them fruitful to bring forth to Jacob a family, of whom came the Israelites, the peculiar people of God. They two are only mentioned, their maids are left out, but understood in them, for that they were the wives' gift unto Jacob, to bear children for them when they bare not. They are said to build the house when they brought forth children, which metaphor is used, because in Hebrew the name of a son (בֵּן) cometh from a word (בָּנָה) which signifieth to build; so as the bringing forth of children is as the building up of an house, by which a family is named for the cohabitation of man and wife together; so we call our kindred and stock our house. Note here, howsoever men have the name of the house, and by them cometh the posterity to be honourable, yet are women the builders up of the house, and are the especial instruments of the increase of posterity; for when men had no children, it is said, the women were barren, and their wombs shut up; and when men had any, it is said, the Lord gave the women to conceive. In them, therefore, is either the increase or decay of posterity, yet both from God, as he either pleaseth to bless or to deny the blessing. By *Israel* is meant *Jacob*, touching which name of Israel note these three things: the change of the name by God himself, Gen. xxxii. 28, and xxxv. 10, to comfort Jacob in great fear for his brother's coming against him, and to shew his more excellent estate than before; for the change of a name was to express a more happy condition, as may appear in a new name promised to the church, Isa. lxii. 2, and given also to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 5, 15; and here before Jacob's name was called Israel, it is said, the Lord blessed him, Gen. xxxii. 26–28, and gave him the name, so as with the change of the name was the change of his estate foretold. The signification of this name, which is the next thing, is prevailing with God, Gen. xxxii. 28, whence we in Christ are called, 'The Israel of God,' Gal. vi., for that we prevail with him through Christ. The third thing is the event, according to the name, for he prevailed against Esau by God's mercy; for though he came against him with four hundred men, yet was his heart so mollified at the sight of his brother, as he with tears embraced him for joy of their meeting, Gen. xxxiii. 4, and xxxvi. 6; and afterwards, when Jacob was in Canaan, Esau gave way unto him, and went into Edom, and left him the land. Thus God made good his promise to Jacob, and made him *Israel*, a true prevailer; for God giveth no signs to his children, but he maketh the same good in the effects and the event answerable thereunto. So much for the words; but in this that these elders and people do pray for a blessing of children from the consideration of God's

former mercies to others, and also do take their example from such as did build up Israel, God's church, and not Babel; Bethel, and not Bethaven; we may learn, first, that God's blessings to others before us are a motive to us that come after, to beg the like blessings in the like case from God, reserving to himself his good pleasure and will, which, in asking the common blessings of the world, is ever the condition either to be expressed or understood; for God's mercies shewed to others are not only for their present good which receive them, but to shew how ready the Lord is to shew the like mercies to others, if they themselves by their sins hinder not the same. Therefore let us consider of God's mercies to others, to be thereby encouraged to ask the like of God for ourselves in the like case, with submission to God's good will and pleasure. Secondly, that such children are to be desired as may be to build up Israel, that is, God's church; such these pray for here. This is the most happy blessing of the womb; thus shall the wife be as the pleasant vine, and the children like olive branches, which a man may behold with comfort; for by them God is glorified in his mercy, the church increased, parents comforted, and children made happy, sons being as plants growing up, and the daughters as corner-stones polished, Ps. cxliv. 12; these be the arrows which make the man blessed that hath his quiver full of them, Ps. cxxvii. 5. But, alas, how few desire such children! Most desire them for their name, for to possess their inheritance after them, but not for the enlargement of God's church; for if so, we would not marry for mere pleasure, as many do, or for the world, as not a few do; but in the Lord, with such as fear God, and so for religion's sake, and have a care to bring up our children in the knowledge of God, and not in the corrupt manners of the world, and fashions of the times, as most do unto vanity; or but unto mere civility, as many do, which are well accounted of, yet never bent their thoughts to true piety in the education of their children.

*And do thou worthily in Ephratah.* This Ephratah is said to be Bethlehem, Gen. xxxv. 19, and xlviii. 7; yet some distinguish them thus, as Ephratah to be the country, and Bethlehem the city, the one signifying *increase*, the other *the house of bread;* which being so, it noteth that where the country is fruitful, and *Ephratah*, increasing, there the towns and cities are *Bethlehem*, store-houses, and houses of bread. So was it in Egypt, in the days of Joseph; for the increase of the field by God's blessing on man's husbandry maketh plenty of food in the places of our dwellings. Our meditation upon this should make us thankful to God, who hath for a long time made our country and fields *Ephratah*, and our cities and towns *Bethlehem*. And let us take heed of sin, which will cause the Lord to turn our plenty into scarcity, and make a barren wilderness of our fruitful land, for the wickednsss of us the inhabitants which dwell in it, Ps. cvii. 33, 34; for we do greatly provoke him to wrath, in abusing his blessings to pride, idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, and want of mercy to the poor, as did wicked Sodom in her fulness. But let us take heed; for the Lord will not ever strive with us thus in mercy; his justice cannot ever suffer it.

The words, 'do thou worthily,' are read also thus, 'get thee riches;' which may well stand, and may be a fit request for Boaz and Ruth after they be married and have increase of children, teaching this, that marriage needeth maintenance, as we all know; for it is chargeable, and that in these respects, in housekeeping, in bringing up of children, and in being liable to rates and seizements, according to the ability of the parties married. And, therefore, let such as intend to marry, provide honestly aforehand for the maintenance of marriage, as Abraham did for Isaac his son, Gen. xiv., and not rush, through unbridled lust, as many young lads and lasses, poor and beggarly, do in these days, to their own hurt, and the putting of a burden upon their neighbours, when they cannot maintain their charge. If any have improvidently married, and now do feel the smart thereof, let them lay their hands to labour, and be the more painful to get, to uphold their family, as Jacob did, Gen. xxx.; and if they be godly and faithful in their labour and service, God will bless them, as he did him, in their measure, and as he in his divine wisdom shall think meet for them. If we take the words as they be in the translation, 'do thou worthily,' let us note that a man may be said to do worthily in a double respect, either in respect of his person, when he doth that which well befits him, according to his birth, his education, his age, his place, and his holy profession of a Christian, as men do expect from such a one; or in respect of the deed done, when it is so done, as the virtues which should concur to the doing thereof do lively appear, and shew themselves in it. To apply this to riches, in the getting, keeping, and employment of them, a man doth worthily, first, in the getting, when these virtues appear: *industry*, painfully labouring, as Jacob did; *equity*, in using only lawful means lawfully, avoiding all fraud, deceit, and unjust courses to get riches; then *piety*, which is a holy depending upon God for a blessing upon the lawful means which he daily begs at his hands, not resting upon his own wit or painstaking; and, lastly, *contentation*, Heb. xiii. 5, not eagerly pursuing after riches, as most do, who fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition, 1 Tim. vi. 9. Secondly, in keeping, a man doth worthily, wherein is shewed *frugality*, a virtuous sparing, and not a niggardly keeping in, unbefitting his ability, his place and person; so also *equity*, even in this, when he will not withhold from another that which is not his own to keep; for injustice may be as well in keeping as in getting. And, thirdly, *piety*, which is, when he sets not his heart on riches, trusts

not in them, nor is lifted up above his brethren, but knoweth himself under God, in the midst of his wealth, walking therefore religiously and humbly. This man so doing, doth worthily. Thirdly, in employing or laying out, he doth worthily, when he is *liberal* to good uses, for the use of God's church, as was David and his princes; and Solomon for the temple; the Israelites before for the tabernacle; and Hezekiah and the people for the priests and Levites, 2 Chron. xxxi. 4, 5, 6, 8; so for the commonwealth, and place of his dwelling, and withal to lay out for his own family, to maintain himself, wife, and children, as befitteth his place, and after his ability; so to take care, and freely to give to nourish his whole family with food sufficient, not neglecting the poor, but to be ready to lend to some, and to give to other some, as their needful estates shall require. Thus shall he by liberality and charity do worthily in laying out.

*And be famous.* This well followeth after the other. They pray that he may do worthily, and then become famous. It is a duty to pray one for another, especially for men of authority, that they may do worthily, and become renowned thereby, Ps. xx., 1 Kings i. 37; for their greater authority, and because their example of well-doing and fame therein will be a great means to persuade others to well-doing, or else a bridle to curb them for fear of offending. Let us then pray for men in place to do worthily, and to become thereby renowned, to provoke others to follow them, and that virtue may be countenanced by them, as it will be by those which be famous for virtue. Note again, that to do worthily, procureth fame, and renown, and good report. So David became famous, 2 Sam. viii. 13; and Solomon by his wisdom and acts, 1 Kings x. 1, 2 Chron. ix. 5; and likewise others obtained good report, Heb. xi. 2; and the fame of our Saviour was spread abroad by his life, doctrine, and miracles; and even Ruth, a poor woman and stranger, by her virtues was made known in Bethlehem, chap. iii. 11. And this cometh to pass by the excellency of well-doing in the minds of such as love it themselves, who cannot but in heart approve, and in tongue extol it, and set forth the due praises of such as do worthily. The Lord also putteth this blessing upon well-doing, that the doers shall receive honour and praise of men. So got David praises even above Saul, 1 Sam. xviii. 7, and was honoured by the commendations of his fact before the king. Therefore, when we see men to do worthily, let us set out their praises, for their encouragement, and to prick forward others to well-doing, and not be like the envious scribes and pharisees, seeking to diminish the honour of Christ; nor like Saul, who sought the life of David; and the Ephraimites, the destruction of Jephthah, for their worthy deeds, Judges xi. and xii.; such a black poison is envy, as it bedarkeneth the name of well-doers as much as it can, rather than to make it famous.

*In Bethlehem:* Here is the place where they desire to have him famous, where he was brought up, where he had his means to live, and place of authority; teaching hereby, that it is there chiefly required for a man to do worthily, where he oweth that duty; as where he hath been brought up, where he hath his estate to live by, and where God hath seated him. So did our Saviour worthily in Nazareth, Luke iv. 16–18; Jephthah among the Gileadites, for their good, and the welfare of all Israel, if Ephraim had so taken it. This is a memorandum to ministers, there to do worthily where God placeth them, and where they have their living, and not be like some that can do worthily abroad sometimes, but at home will take little or no pains to teach their people. This also should put gentlemen and men of place in mind to do worthily in the country, in good house-keeping among their tenants, from whence they have their revenues; and not get up to cities, there to keep a private table, to increase their estate, or else to uphold their pride. Neither yet is it enough for men to dwell in the country, as divers do, but do not worthily, their neighbours being never a whit the better for them, but are either so niggardly, as they benefit none, living only to themselves, or else so prodigal, as they rob their tenants with borrowing, and divers other ways, both sorts overcharging them.

Ver. 12. *And let thy house be like the house of Pharez (whom Tamar bare unto Judah), of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.*

These words be the third part of their prayer. They did first pray for the woman, as the builder of the house, as before it is said of Rachel and Leah; next for the man, because he is the glory of the house; now for the posterity, because they do continue it. Here note what is prayed for, an honourable posterity, set out by the house of Pharez, whose father and mother are mentioned; then, of whom it must come, and by whose gift and goodness.

*And let thy house.* That is, thy children and posterity: so as they praying before for the parents, and now for the children, do teach this, that they which truly wish well in love to the parents, cannot but be well-minded to their children and posterity, 1 John v. 1; so did David to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, 2 Sam. ix. and xix.; to Chimham, the son of Barzillai; and to Hanun, the son of the king of Ammon; for how can we love the fountain, and not the stream? the root, and not that which springeth from it? Let us try hereby true love to parents, by the love we bear to their children.

*Be like the house of Pharez.* Pharez signifieth a *breach*, because in the womb he strove for the birthright, and brake out before his brother Zarah, who had put out his hand to come first forth, to be the first-born, but plucked back his hand again. Zarah may set out the Jews, who were the first of God's people, but by apostasy lost their birthright; Pharez

may set out the Gentiles, who made a breach upon them, and got the birthright and the honour to be called now the people of God. There be two sorts of Pharezes, one heavenly, which strive for to be of the first-born of God. This is a blessed striving, which few contend for. There is another earthly, when brethren contend for to get the elder brother's inheritance from him, and do labour to get him disinherited. The neglect of the former is unholiness, and the pursuing of the latter is too great worldliness. These words, to 'be like the house of Pharez,' give us to know, that he was greatly blessed and honourable in his posterity, seeing they desire that Boaz's house might be like his. Now men wish not such a thing to great persons, but where there is an estate answerable to their greatness, and may well befit them, and be held a blessing unto them; and yet this Pharez was base gotten, and that in incest also. Whence we may see, that basely begotten may become very honourable, so as it may be happy with others to be blessed like them for worldly respects. Thus also was Jephthah honourable, Judges xi., a man of valour, made the head over all the inhabitants of Gilead, and yet the son of an harlot. Thus it pleaseth God to shew mercy on whom he will shew mercy; which may comfort such as be base born, that if they bewail their birth, and repent and believe, the Lord will have mercy likewise on them, and register them in the bead-roll of the saints, as Jephthah is, Heb. xi. Again, this may teach, from these elders and people, that they are to be esteemed honourable whom God doth make honourable; for these speak highly of Pharez for all his birth; and the Gileadites thought worthily of Jephthah, and did him honour; yea, the Holy Ghost hath vouchsafed to honour him, and to put him among the faithful, though he was by birth a bastard. They, therefore, do amiss, who despise men for their birth, when otherwise they be worthily qualified, and better conditioned than those, perhaps, which be more lawfully begotten. True it is, that a bastard was not to come into the congregation for ten generations; but God can dispense with his law, and where he so doth, let us do them honour, and not debase whom the Lord exalteth.

*Whom Tamar bare unto Judah.* Judah was one of Jacob's sons, and one of the twelve patriarchs, and begot this Pharez on this woman Tamar, who was his daughter-in-law. The history is in Gen. xxxviii. Whence we may note briefly, that great were the falls of many of the holy patriarchs; as nine of them, in the conspiracy against innocent Joseph, Gen. xxxvii. 2, 3, 11, whose death they intended, because he told his father their ill report; for that also Jacob loved him more than all of them, and because he told them his dream, for which they the more envied him, and were the more bent against him. But more particularly Reuben fell into that foul sin, to lie with his father's concubine; Simeon and Levi, brethren in evil, who, under colour of religion, sought to revenge themselves, and abused the seal of God's covenant to shed much blood; and Judah here committeth incest with Tamar. Thus may we see, that men of note, children of godly parents, and pillars of the church, may fall very fearfully; as may also appear, besides these, in Aaron, in Samson, Abiathar, David, Solomon, and many others. Such is the strength of corruption, when we are left of God, and therefore are we to fear and to look to our standing; watch and pray continually, lest we fall into temptation and be overcome. And also we may observe how Jesus Christ was contented to come of such as were tainted with foul vices, as of men stained and polluted with incest, as Judah; with adultery and murder, as David; with idolatry, as Ahaz; with witchcraft and sorcery, as Manasseh; so of women defiled, as of this Tamar; of Rahab the harlot; and of Bathsheba, which sinned in adultery with David: to shew hereby, that he, our blessed Saviour, came into the world to save sinners, which is for the comfort of the penitent, 1 Tim. i. 15. And here also such as be godly may learn not to be discouraged, not to be daunted, neither to account worse of themselves, because they have had of their kindred foully tainted with vices. We see here the innocent Lamb of God to have been of such, and yet he the Holy One of Israel. Let such, then, put themselves to silence, who seek to disgrace the well-deserving by the stain of ancestors, or some of their kindred. By thus doing, men should offer wrong to Jesus Christ, which every saint of God is very far from; and who is he that should not be disgraced, if this might serve to disgrace a man? Note farther, how these words come in by a parenthesis: whether uttered by the elders and people, or else put in by the penman of the Holy Ghost, it is not material; but here we see how God would have a remembrance of the birth of Pharez, with his honour and outward blessings from God; for that it is good in our great glory and outward prosperity to be put in mind whence we be. Thus God put David in remembrance, 2 Sam. vii. 8, and Jeroboam; for so such persons shall have cause to praise God for his mercies, and be kept humble, and not forget themselves, as men commonly do in their peace and prosperity. Let such, then, as be raised up from a low estate, remember whence they are, and be willing to hear thereof from others; for God's mercies shall be the more known, admired, and glorified, whose praise we must seek with the very utter contempt of ourselves, if so the case shall require. How great a sign of pride is it then, and of a will to obscure God's mercies, when men shall chafe in themselves against such as shall mention their mean or base birth! But if men may not forget whence they be in their worldly advancement, then may we not forget our natural birth in our spiritual exaltation, when we be made the children of God, kings and priests to him, of children of wrath, and

bond-slaves to Satan. If the remembrance of the other put us in mind of God's mercy, much more this, for between them is no comparison. Lastly, note that it is said, that Tamar bore Pharez unto Judah. Mothers bring forth children to the fathers of the children; so it is said that Leah bare sons to Jacob, Gen. xxix. 34; for the father is to bear the name, and take the child into his care and tuition, whether born in wedlock or otherwise. Let fathers, therefore, take care of such as they beget, for to them hath the mothers brought them out.

*Of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.* Hence may be observed, that an old man may marry a young woman; as here Boaz did Ruth, and Joseph did the Virgin Mary; but not for wantonness, but for issue and posterity, as Boaz doth. Allow, therefore, of such marriages in such a case, but beware of an old man lecherous, who is one that God hateth; so an old woman wantonly affected to marry with a young man. Secondly, that children are God's gift, Gen. xlii. 9, of which at large before, which must move us to thank God for them, and to train them up to his service, and to acknowledge them his gracious gift, as Jacob did, Gen. xxxiii. 5. Thirdly, that true prayer is not without faith, for it proceedeth from it, as the apostle teacheth, Rom. x. 14; and here the words plainly imply that these elders and people were persuaded that God would give to Boaz children of Ruth, for they said, 'Which the Lord shall give thee.' As taking it for granted that he would give him children, which they were persuaded unto from the young years of Ruth, then from the obedience of Boaz, who married Ruth only to raise up children to the dead, that his name might not perish, according to the law of God, Deut. xxv., which he herein chiefly respected; and, thirdly, because this was the line and stock out of which the Messiah should come, according to Jacob's prophecy; and therefore they knew that of these should come issue to fulfil the prophecy. In praying, let us also with these believe, so are we commanded, James i. 6; and if we do believe, we shall obtain what we ask, if the Lord think it needful for us, Mat. xxi. 22, for the prayer of faith availeth much if it be fervent, James v. 15–17. Fourthly and lastly, hence observe, that prayer is a means to make an honourable house, and to continue it in the following posterity. Therefore David used prayer in this case, 2 Sam. vii. 25, as these do here for Boaz's house in his posterity; and so did Abraham pray for Ishmael to continue in the Lord's sight, Gen. xvii. 20, who promised him mercy, and an honourable issue to many generations from him. Let us use this means to uphold and continue our house. I have spoken of many good means before (out of ver. 5), let this be added to them. But men in their worldly wisdom seek by other means, without prayer, to continue their posterity in honour; as by these, first, by great purchases for their children. But doth not Solomon tell them, Prov. xxvii. 24, that riches are not for ever? And we find it true by experience. Secondly, by building stately houses, and calling them by their own names, thinking that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations. But doth not the psalmist tell them that 'this their way is their folly'? Ps. xlix. 13. Is not the tower of Babel thrown down? Gen. xi. 4, 8; and, became not that their confusion, by which they sought a name, and to continue together? Thirdly, by entailing of lands upon the heirs male from one to another for many generations; but could there be a surer entail than the kingdom of Israel to David, which yet was almost quite cut off by Solomon's idolatry, so as Rehoboam lost ten tribes in his days? Entail it as sure as they can, yet the iniquity of the children will make it to be cut off. God liketh not that men should by their devices tie his blessings to whom they list, for vain-glory's sake, and to keep up a name. And do not we see lawyers, which teach parents to entail, how they can teach their children to untail it again. Fourthly, by matching with great houses, and by this they think their house shall stand; but did not Ahab, by marrying with Jezebel, the king of Sidon's daughter, root out his whole posterity? and did not Jehoshaphat, by marrying his son to Ahab's daughter, do almost the like? Fifthly and lastly, by procuring great places of honour in the commonwealth, oh then they think they are surely founded; but doth not Solomon tell them, Prov. xxvii. 24, that the crown endureth not to every generation? But let these consider of Haman and of his high place, and yet how suddenly he came to a fearful end; and with this let them not forget the treasurer Shebna, Isa. xxii. 16, 17, 21, who graved, as it were, his habitation in a rock by policy, and by making strong sides for himself. But doth not Isaiah say, that the Lord would lead him into captivity, and violently turn him, and toss him as a ball, and drive him from his station, and bestow his place upon another? And therefore, without the Lord, all these means are weak to uphold a house; yea, such a house sin will undermine and cause to fall. Let none, therefore, rest on these weak props, but pray unto the Lord for his blessing, which maketh strong the habitation of the righteous.

Ver. 13. *So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.*

Here is the full accomplishment of the marriage, the holy liberty thereof, and the blessing of God upon the same, both for conception and bringing forth a son.

*So Boaz took Ruth.* Where he took her it is not mentioned; whether after this assembly was dismissed, or before, is not certain; some think she stayed with Naomi, expecting the success, as Naomi advised in chap. iii. ver. 18, and so from thence did

take her. It may be she was, while this assembly was together (after Boaz had publicly declared his mind, and bought the land and her at the hands of the kinsman), brought in thither, and so he there did solemnly take here; for in the end of the former verse it is said, 'Of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of *this* young woman,' as implying her then there present. And *he took her* implieth the marriage, as appeareth elsewhere in other places, Gen. xxiv. 67, 1 Sam. xxv. 43, Judges xiv. 8. And the next words in the text shew, that it was not like Shechem's taking of Dinah to deflower her, Gen. xxxiv. 2, but to make her his wife by lawful wedlock, which was ever public, and not done privately in corners. So then the meaning of the words is, that Boaz did marry Ruth, and so was his wife; and with us, such as do marry, do take either other by the hand, and do by word of mouth say, that the one doth take the other to live together as man and wife. And it may be that the word *taking* is put for *marrying*, to note the free consent of mind and heart; then the right and interest which the one hath in the other; and, thirdly, the care and protection of the husband which he taketh of his wife, and the woman's acknowledgment to have betaken herself unto the man as her head and husband. This Boaz's taking and marrying of Ruth sheweth how a nobleman (for his father was the prince of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 10) may marry with a mean poor woman, so she be virtuous, as his father did Rahab before, and Ahasuerus did Esther, and no disparagement; though Boaz had further reason to lead him thereto, as his own words before declare, ver. 10. Again, we see how an Israelite might marry with a woman a stranger, so she were a convert. And lastly, that a good man will keep his honest word; for what he had privately promised, chap. iii. 11, 13, he here now maketh good to the utmost; of which two last points I have spoken before.

*And she was his wife;* that is, by his taking and marrying of her. So we see that lawful marriage is that which maketh man and woman husband and wife, So is it said of Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 67, that 'Isaac took her,' and she was his wife; and in like case of the woman of Timnath which Samson did marry, Judges xiv. 8, 15. It is not living or lying together, as lewd persons may do, nor yet mutual affection, but the entering in God's holy ordinance, which maketh the woman the wife. Therefore, to live honestly, and to make a woman thy wife, marry her lawfully. Now in this that the marriage is so shortly described, without mentioning of any such feasting and merriments, as is often with us, with too much riot and excess, it may here be demanded, Whether it be lawful to make feasts at marriages, and then to be merry? *Ans.* It is lawful to be merry in sobriety, to rejoice and sing, so it be with grace in our hearts, as the apostle speaketh, Eph. v. 19. And we may make feasts, as Laban did at Jacob's marriage, Gen. xxix. 22, and as Samson did at his, Judges xiv. 10, as the custom was among the Philistines, which he observed; yea, our Saviour was at a feast when some were married, and did by divine power supply their want of wine, John ii.; and by the parable, Mat. xxii. 2, and xxv, it seemeth to be an usual thing to feast, and to have solemnities observed besides at marriages. Here only beware of wantonness, riot, and excess, and then may they eat, and drink, and rejoice their hearts.

*And when he went in unto her.* This is expounded in another place, to go to her into the chamber, Judges xv. 1; for brides had a private chamber, into which the bridegroom entered on the marriage day, Joel ii. 16; but here is modestly implied the act of marriage, set out also in Scripture by other terms, as of knowing, lying with one, giving due benevolence; never speaking hereof but by a periphrasis and circumlocution; and therefore are we hereby taught, that when necessity enforceth to speak of that, which in proper speech is not comely to utter, it is to be expressed so as chaste ears may not be offended. This the Holy Ghost, in thus setting down this thing in these modest terms, teacheth; and it serveth to reprove such as abuse their tongues to wantonness, and lascivious and immodest terms, to make others merry, and to be held pleasant companions; but such fools, as Solomon calleth them, make a sport of sin; for these offend against the commandment and charge given by the apostle, Eph. iv. 29, Col. iii., Eph. v. 3; they corrupt good manners by their ill words, 1 Cor. xv. 33; they trespass against the seventh commandment, and do contrary to that which the apostle teacheth and exhorteth unto for the government of the tongue both in speaking and singing; yea, these do grieve, not, as they think, only men, such as they judge over-precise, because they will not run with them into the like excess of riot, but the blessed Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30. And let these know, that if men must give an account unto God for every idle word, then surely for such filthy communication and bawdy songs, which fleshly spirits made themselves merry withal, which godly men have condemned, calling such a speech the chariot of adultery, because it bringeth many to such a lewd practice. Heathen by laws have forbidden it,* for that it polluteth the mind, filleth it with wickedness, and maketh such impudent; and also did punish the same, as is reported of the Romans,† that so the dignity of the laws and discipline among them might remain, as one saith, inviolable. What a shame and impudence is it then in such as would be called Christians, and yet cannot by reason nor religion of Christ be restrained from such petulancy and wantonness. Note again here, how this is spoken after marriage, and not before, to teach that such as be married may lawfully company together, Gen. xxix. 21, and that by warrant from God, who said, after he had made man, and joined Adam and

* Athenian law, *apud Stobæum.* † Au. Gell.

Eve in marriage, Increase and multiply; and the apostle teacheth, 1 Cor. vii. 3, 5, that then neither of them hath power over their own body, and hereof maketh a double use, to render due benevolence, and not to defraud one another. Then they are to be reproved which before marriage company one with another, as incontinent and violently lustful persons do, and such as being married do defraud one another. And here this condemneth the church of Rome, which alloweth man and wife, upon the vow of chastity (forsooth), to live asunder one from another, contrary to the apostle's doctrine and exhortation, 1 Cor. vii. 5.

*The Lord gave her conception.* Hence it is evident that the gift of conception is from the Lord; and this is true not only in such as be altogether barren, as was Sarah, Rebekah, Hannah, the Shunamite, and Elizabeth, but in such as be at the first fruitful; this also is from his gift, Job x. 8, 10, 11. And therefore is it to be ascribed to him, he is to be thanked for it; we are not to think, as Rachel did, that a husband can give children; it is no strength of body, nor good complexion, that can make fruitful, but the blessing of God. And we may further learn here, that the Lord alloweth of the honest act of marriage, for he commandeth due benevolence, 1 Cor. vii; he calleth the marriage bed undefiled, Heb. xiii. 4; he blesseth it, and giveth the gift of conception; he allowed thereof before the fall, Gen. i., and hath in mercy ordained it as a remedy against sin, 1 Cor. vii. 2. This, therefore, confuteth such as have judged the companying together of man and wife to be a sinful act, absurdly and profanely abusing this place for it, 'those that live in the flesh cannot please God;' as if that which God himself hath allowed, and most holy men of God have done, should be now that which should debar them of God's favour, when yet these popish harlotries can dispense with God's law, and keep their whores, and yet not live in the flesh, but be holy men! But let them know, that whoremongers and adulterers God will judge, Heb. xiii.; when marriage is honourable, and the bed undefiled, and the liberty to be used and allowed for procreation of children, to avoid fornication, with hearty thanks unto God for his ordinance. Here note farther the difference which the Scripture maketh between conception of a woman a wife and of another. In copulation out of marriage, it is said of a woman, that she conceived, as Tamar by Judah, Gen. xxxviii. 18, Hagar by Abraham, Gen. xvi. 4, and Bathsheba by David, 2 Sam. xi. 5, but never as here, that 'the Lord gave her to conceive;' for the other is by his common blessing, as among brute beasts, but this by his favourable approbation and gracious blessing, as Jacob said of his children unto Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 5.

*And she bare a son.* After the gift of conception followeth childbirth, not forthwith, but in due time of life, Gen. xviii. 10, which is sometime at the ninth month, but commonly at the tenth. It was not enough that she should conceive, and after have an abortive birth, but that God in mercy should preserve the child alive in the mother's womb to be timely born; for as not to conceive, but to be barren, was a punishment, so conceiving, and to bring forth an untimely birth, is in the same nature. The Lord therefore here sheweth his goodness, not only in giving conception, but a happy deliverance unto Ruth, and a timely birth; so the Lord followeth his with his mercies. Now, in that it is said to be a son, and not a daughter, it is to note the greater blessing. For it is a greater blessing to have a son than a daughter. And therefore we do find, when God would make the barren to bear, and such as had begged that blessing at his hands, he gave them sons, as we may see in Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth, and in others. Because the son is the upholder of the name of the family, he is in nature the more worthy; for the woman was made for man, and not man for the woman, as the apostle teacheth; and the man is a more fitter instrument for the good of the church or commonweal, albeit sometime the Lord hath done wondrously by women. Besides these reasons, the males among the Israelites were a greater blessing; for that the man-child, and the continuance of the line in Judah, gave them hope of the Messiah, which they looked for; and the male child bare upon him the seal of the covenant of God, which was circumcision, that God would be their God, and of their seed after them. Therefore praise God for this blessing and birth, for both, but more specially for this, as beholding therein the Lord's mercy to keep thy name upon the earth, among thy brethren, and saints of God. Lastly, note the effectual power of the prayer which they made, ver. 11. The Lord heard them; for here we see Ruth, before barren, is now become fruitful. So as we hereby do learn, that the hearty and faithful prayer of the godly is never in vain; for the people and elders desired that Ruth should be fruitful, and she was so; and also that Boaz's posterity might be honourable and renowned, and so it was, as we may see in the 21st and 22d verses of this chapter. For an effectual prayer of righteous men availeth much, as James saith, James v. 16, 17, and proveth by an instance of the prayer of Elijah, and as may be seen in the prayer of Moses, of Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 11, 12; Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 6, 14, 15; Isaiah and Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 20; and of many more, which is to encourage us to the exercise of prayer in faith and fervency of spirit. If any think that those afore named were extraordinary men, and that therefore we poor and miserable persons, in comparison of them, cannot look to have our prayers so effectual with God; I answer, first, that James takes away this objection and fear of acceptance with God; for he saith, that 'Elias was a man subject to the like passions as we are,' yet he prayed and was heard; secondly, that we have assistance of God his Spirit, teaching us to pray with groans

which cannot be expressed, because we know not how to pray as we ought; and, thirdly, that Christ prayeth for us, and in him we offer up our supplications, and so shall be heard. This lesson also teacheth us to esteem greatly of the prayers of the godly, seeing they be so effectual, and desire them to pray for us, as the Israelites did Samuel, and St Paul the faithful and saints of God, as may appear in almost every of his epistles, so highly did he account of their prayers for him.

Ver. 14. *And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.*

Praise and thanksgiving unto God at the birth of the child. The parties rejoicing were the women; their joy was uttered to Naomi, the manner was holy and religious, praising God; the matter thereof, or the moving cause, was, that God had not left her without a kinsman; and the hopeful end thereof, that his name may be famous in Israel.

*And the women said.* That is, such godly women as were at the child-birth, these rejoiced in Naomi's behalf. For it is the duty of one to rejoice in the welfare of another, when God bestoweth his blessings upon them. As these do here, the neighbours of Elizabeth, Luke i. 58; Jethro, at the prosperity of Israel, Exod. xviii. 9; and the friends of Job at his recovery, Job xlii. 11. This we are commanded to do, to rejoice with those that do rejoice, Rom. xii. 15; the godly are members one of another, 1 Cor. xii. 26; and therefore must needs have a fellow feeling; it is a fruit of love and charity, and that we love our neighbour as ourselves, Mat. xxii. 19, which if we do, we will rejoice in their welfare, as we do in our own. But let this be with them in lawful things; for charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, 1 Cor. xiii.; let us rejoice with them in their happy and blessed welfare, whether temporal, as former examples shew, or spiritual, as St Paul rejoiced in the behalf of the Philippians and Colossians, Philip. i. 3, 4, Col. i. 3, 12; and St John in the graces of the elect lady and her children, 2 John ver. 4. This reproveth three sorts: first, such as envy the prosperity of others, as Sanballats and Tobiases, Neh. ii. 10; like Egyptians, Exod. i., which cannot endure to see others prosper by them. These are void of charity, which is without envy, 1 Cor. xiii. 4; and they are like the devil, that being cast from heaven, could not endure to see man in paradise; or like devilish men, Cain, Saul, and the scribes and pharisees, the enemies of Christ. Secondly, such as rejoice with their friends in their prosperity, though they get up by unjust means, and by unlawful practices uphold themselves. This is not true love, 1 Cor. xiii. 6; for here is more cause of mourning than of rejoicing; for what joy can it be to a godly heart to see his friend rich and in glory by usury, bribery, oppression, deceit, and fraud, which came for plagues upon him from heaven, and are the highway to hell and damnation? But outward prosperity so dazzleth the eyes, and deludeth the heart, as the plagues of the soul, and vengeance due for the same, they either see not, or believe not; therefore they rejoice like worldlings with such as themselves. The third sort are they, which cannot rejoice with others in their spiritual welfare, that men are become godly, as St Paul and John did, but rather despise them for it, because they themselves savour not of the things of God, they love darkness rather than the light. If they do rejoice herein, it is rather for the good which conversion brings in worldly respects, than of religion itself, as that hereby they leave to be unthrifty, and do care to live in the world, and such like, which is no rejoicing at their heavenly graces, but for worldly profit, and for such things as religion maketh good in regard of the outward things of this life; as profit, good report in a common acception, civil carriage, and so forth. This is a worldly, and not a spiritual rejoicing with those that truly rejoice in the Spirit.

*Unto Naomi.* And why to her more than to Ruth? Because she was the principal instrument for the effecting of the marriage, and she stood in most need of comfort, having endured a long time affliction. For those chiefly are to be cheered with the consideration of God's mercies and blessings, who have been most humbled; as these do here Naomi; for they speak so to her, as if this blessing had been only for her comfort, saying, He hath not left *thee* without a kinsman, he shall be to *thee* a restorer of life, and so forth. And therefore when we see any to have been much cast down, and that the Lord beginneth to shew them mercy, let us speak thereof cheerfully unto them, and comfort their hearts; for they know how to use well God's mercies, their former humiliation hath prepared them, hath schooled them, so as they will not wax proud with the Lord's blessings, as others do.

*Blessed be the Lord.* Words of praise and thanksgiving to the author of this blessing. Thus begin they their joy and mirth; for the joy of the godly is holy and religious; for the matter of their joy is good and lawful, the manner with grace in the heart, as the apostle exhorteth, Eph. v. 19, and the end, to set forth the Lord's glory, of whom with praises they make mention. This was the joy of Moses and the Israelites, Exod. xv.; of Deborah and Barak, Judges v.; of Jehoshaphat and Judah, 2 Chron. xx.; of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i.; for the godly take occasion from all the good which befalleth them to be mindful of the Lord, from whom they know they receive all blessings, whatsoever they be, and whosoever be the instruments thereof to them; with David therefore, Ps. ciii., they say, 'O my soul, praise thou the Lord, and forget not all his benefits!' If this be the joy of the godly, what wickedness then is it in those, who in their mirth, and in the midst of God's blessings, do put away the remembrance of God, and

the thought of his precepts; spiritual songs, and gracious speeches mar utterly their mirth; the presence of the godly is hateful to them, and hindereth their merriments; for they cannot rejoice but in vanity; their talk is ribaldry, their songs wantonness, their laughter madness, and the delight of their hearts mere sensuality; the mirth of these must turn into mourning before they die, else shall their music be elsewhere weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. And here, before I end this, women may learn how to behave themselves at the birth of children, as first in prayer, then in praises; pray they should for pardon of sin, and bewail, in the woman's pangs, original corruption; in the birth, our spiritual pollution; and praise God they ought for safe deliverance, acknowledging it his mercy and goodness, as these do here. Many things might move them hereto, and to be far from the behaviour of some, who instead of praising God, sit down to be merry, and to spend their speeches idly, prating of others, yea, sometimes in lewd slandering of their neighbours, or in filthy scurrility, wherein the midwife, which should be a mother of modesty, is often chief; when such should be chaste, grave, and godly matrons, who by their office and godly counsel might do much good, if they were as they ought to be; but so lewd are some of them, as they cannot endure the company of better disposed persons. Their praises should be like the midwives in Egypt, Exod. i., women fearing God, able to instruct, to comfort, to pray unto God, and to praise him for his goodness.

*Which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman.* This is it they bless God for, that God had given to Naomi a young kinsman, a kinsman indeed, which will so shew himself. Naomi had a kinsman very nigh unto her before, chap. iii. 12, but he shewed himself not like a kinsman, and therefore was here passed over as no kinsman. For as men indeed shew themselves, such they be, and so are to be esteemed, otherwise they have but a name of a brother, father, kinsman, friend, Christian, yea, minister, magistrate, and have not the truth, and substance of such. They be but merely titular, and glory in shadows, as most do, who are nothing answerable to that title and name of nature, of love, of fellowship, or of office and place, which they are called by or settled in. Note further, that it is of God that the godly poor are not left comfortless of some friend, one or other, both able and willing to help them. Thus the women here tell Naomi, and do bless God therefore in her behalf; for if God should not raise them up succour, who would respect unto them? Because poverty causeth contempt, or neglect at the least, and the religion of the poor is but held counterfeit, and themselves hypocrites, so the world judgeth of them. And therefore when God raiseth up friends to take knowledge of them, and to do them good, great cause have they to bless God, as they here do, both for hope of supply of wants, and also preventing of injuries, which honest poor, by such able and good friends, are less subject unto than others which want them.

*That his name may be famous in Israel.* This is the hope they have of this young Obed; and one mercy of God in giving this son unto this honourable family is, that he might be renowned among God's people. Whence note these two lessons: first, that much is expected and looked for from the children of great and godly parents, both in respect of the parents and also of the children. For it is supposed that parents being godly, will have care to instruct, and if need be to correct their children, to pray for them, and be good examples to them; and being great, that they will use the best means and procure the best helps for their good education, and leave them sufficient to shew forth the fruits of godliness. And if thus parents do, who may imagine otherwise, till the contrary appear, but that the children of such will demean themselves as they should? And who can expect but good from the children of godly parents? Should not the father's graces provoke children to goodness? and their greatness to abhor base practices? Good children will not degenerate from good parents, whose goodness will more persuade to well-doing than greatness to make them proud and wicked, as some Absaloms and Esaus have been, and yet are, to the grief of religious parents, and at length to the shame and confusion of themselves. Secondly, here may be observed, that God giveth children to the better sort, great and honourable, that they may become famous amongst God's people. So conceived these godly women of this son of Boaz; for, indeed, all the blessings of riches and honour given unto parents, are not only given for their own good, but amongst other ends, for the better enabling of them to bring up their family in good order, and especially their children in the ways of God, for his service and honour, as they have more means to provoke them thereto. Let therefore such parents here take such a course with their children, as they may make them, by God's blessing, famous in Israel, in God's church, and among his people, which they may effect by these good means: first, by being every way and at all times a good example of piety to them, as David was, Ps. ci., and Zacharias, Luke i. Secondly, by instructing them carefully in godliness and religion, as parents are commanded, Eph. iv. 4, and as David did instruct Solomon, Prov. iv. Thirdly, by seeing them set to the practice of that which they are taught, and to have an especial eye thereto. Men teach their children good manners among men, for civil carriage of their outward man, and will see therein if they offend, and reprove them; so should they thus see to them in their Christian good manners and behaviour towards God and good men, and in every Christian duty towards all. Fourthly, by settling them in some particular calling, as Adam the monarch of the world did his sons, to keep them from idleness, from being busybodies, and from a world

of wickedness, which such as live but of* a calling run into. Fifthly, by restraining them from ill company, idle, wanton, prodigal and profane persons, and exhorting them to have fellowship with such as fear God, also with civil and honest men well reported of, well brought up, and well disposed unto goodness. Sixthly, by commending, countenancing, and encouraging their well-doing, both by present rewards and promises of future good; but if they do ill, then fatherly to admonish at the first, to withhold them from evil by love rather than by slavish fear; but if this will not prevail, then to rebuke sharply, and to punish as the cause shall require. Thus if parents would do, there is no doubt but, by God's mercy, many men's children of place may become famous in Israel, and not be so infamous as some be, to parents' shame and their own overthrow.

Ver. 15. *And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.*

This is still the continued speech of the women to Naomi; the scope whereof is still to comfort her, in foreshewing what this babe should be unto her, and the reason why they so speak of him.

*And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life.* Naomi had many crosses, she had lost her husband and children, yea, and her outward state in the world, which made her, as it were, dead with sorrow, which these women and godly neighbours well considered of, and here therefore do enlarge their speech for Naomi's greater comfort; to teach us, that true friends, affected with others' miseries, cannot but meditate many arguments of comfort in the days of their felicity. For the joy of their hearts is unfeigned for their friends' prosperity, as truly as before they were moved with their calamity. Thus let us learn to try the sympathy of men's hearts towards other in prosperity and adversity.

*A restorer of thy life.* So they speak, as if by her former misery she had, as it were, been lifeless. Whence note, that heavy crosses, as poverty, old age, widowhood, and loss of children, do bedead the spirit even of godly persons. So these words imply, and experience teacheth. For no affliction is joyous for the present, but grievous, Heb. xii. 12. How much more when many come together! Therefore let us have compassion of the afflicted, and labour to raise up their spirits, especially of poor afflicted widows, for it is a part of pure and undefiled religion before God, James i. 27. This condemneth such of cruelty as will vex the afflicted, or be miserable comforters, as Job's friends were to him. Secondly, we may learn, that godly children are as restorers of life to their parents, Prov. x. 1, they make them glad. Let children labour to be such that they may cheer up their parents' hearts, and not be, as too many be, causers of heart's grief to them, making them to go down with mourning to the grave, for such are foolish children, Prov. xv. 20, and x. 1, and xvii. 25.

*And a nourisher of thine old age.* Note, first, that old age needs nourishing, for it maketh man feeble and to want heat, 1 Kings i. 1, Eccles. xii. 3; also to be subject to diseases, as to be blind, as was Isaac, Gen. xxvii., and Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 10, and to be lame, as Asa, 1 Kings xv. Therefore in the youth of summer provide somewhat for the winter of old age, and when thou hast provision for age thank God therefore. Secondly, that children are to be nourishers of their parents in their old age; as Joseph was to Jacob, Gen. xlv. 11, and Ruth, but a daughter-in-law, here to Naomi, chap. iii. 18; and such a one the women hoped Obed would be. Let children learn this duty. For, first, nature teacheth it, in the stork; and branches of trees, receiving the sap from the root, do return it again to it towards winter. Secondly, Reason teacheth to be thankful, and to do good to them that have done us good. From parents children have being, bringing up, and their preservation, whose love, care, pains, and cost, children can never recompense. Thirdly, it is one end why they be born; for if a friend be born to help his friend in adversity, Prov. xvii. 17, then much more children to help their parents, who are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. Fourthly, parents are children's glory, Prov. xvii. 6, therefore should they make much of them. Fifthly, here to add the commandment, Exod. xx., to honour our parents. Now how are they honoured, when in want they are not relieved? Sixthly, such as succour their parents may expect a blessing from their children. Those children, therefore, which are without natural affection, sin against God, against nature, reason, and religion. But children will perhaps say, Our parents are froward and hard to please, and therefore they make us weary and unwilling to keep and nourish them. *Ans.* First, consider how froward you were in childhood, and yet poor parents carefully kept you and cast you not off. Secondly, when old age cometh, you may be such. Do then as you would be done unto; learn to bear with your parents, to teach your children how to bear with you. Thirdly, note how children can bear with rich parents well enough, while they hope for profit, and fear to lose what they look for. If hope of gain can make children put on such patience, then let true love do it much more.

*For thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better than seven sons, hath borne him.* This is a reason of the women's hope of this child's kindness towards Naomi. From these words we may learn these things: First, that there is a good hope of children's love, which come of loving parents, that they will love such as their parents have loved. Thus the women conclude; and this was a lesson which David taught his son Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 7; and Christ

* That is, 'without'—ED.

loving those whom his Father loveth, teacheth so much. Let, therefore, children be thus affected, especially if their parents have set their love aright, upon such as were worthy of love. Secondly, that there may be great love between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. Ruth's love towards Naomi was very great, she left her country and kindred for her, chap. i. 16, 17; laboured painfully for her, chap. ii. 18, 23; and Naomi was not wanting to seek the good of Ruth, chap. iii. Let these two be examples to such; and to make them loving, strive to be religious, and to fear God, as these did; for religion will work what corrupt nature cannot effect. Let them perform mutual duties, and let stepmothers know that they step in to be instead of natural mothers, and so let children take them, so will they love one another. Thirdly, that true love cannot be hid, for it so will express itself as others shall take notice of it. These women knew Ruth's love; so did Saul, Jonathan's to David; the people, Christ's love to Lazarus, John xi. 36, for true love will break out as fire. Try true love by the manifestation thereof. Joseph may hide his a while from his brethren, Gen. xlv. 1, and David from Absalom, 2 Sam. xiii. 39 and xiv. 1, but it will break out at length. They, therefore, but boast vainly of love which never express it. Fourthly, that true love in adversity is not lost in prosperity. Ruth is still said to love Naomi though thus exalted; so did Hushai David, so did Job's friends, chap. ii, howsoever they erred in judgment. Let not love be altered with our estates, nor honour change good conditions, as it doth in too many. Fifthly, that the loves of a stranger may sometime exceed the love of many children by nature. The women prefer Ruth's love above seven sons, that is, above many sons. Such God by favour can supply what is wanting in them by nature, and make a stranger's love surpass. Let this be comfort to the distressed.

Ver. 16. *And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.*

This verse sheweth the education of the child, by whom, and how.

*And Naomi took the child.* This the old woman did voluntarily, out of her true love both to the mother and the child. She was in the house of Boaz, that great rich man, we here see, and so well provided for in her old age, yet would she take pains, and not be idle. So we see, that the godly, though old, and well provided for, yet will set themselves to labour, and do something; for they make conscience of their time, not to spend their days in idleness, which they know to be a foul sin and the nurse of many. They will labour to be an example unto others, and to spur the younger on to take pains. Though they live of themselves, yet they owe a duty to God to be doing what they may; and if they live upon others, herein they shew their good will, to be as little chargeable as they may, and to be thankful after their strength and power. Now, this holy woman is herein to be imitated; and let none think that they may be excused to live idly, either for age, so long as they can take pains, or for that they have enough to live upon, because God giveth none riches to live a lazy life; but such, even old persons, should live either in labour, as St Paul willeth the widow of threescore years old, 1 Tim. v. 4, or in teaching and instructing others, Titus ii. 3, 4; a blessed exercise for old folk, which will give them comfort in the end of their days.

*And laid it in her bosom.* This sheweth her love, and with what tender affection she took him into her hands. Four things might move Naomi thus affectionately to love the babe: First, her love to the mother, who so exceedingly loved her. Secondly, her love to Boaz the father, who had so mercifully dealt with her. Thirdly, her love to her husband Elimelech, departed, whose name was raised up again by this child, upon his inheritance. Fourthly, her great hope of joy and comfort from the child itself, as the women foretell in the former verse. Howsoever it was, here we may see, that parents carry a hearty affection towards their children; they be in their hearts and bosom; for if this love was in Naomi, a mother-in-law, we may well conclude it in natural mothers, which may appear many ways, in their great pains and care in nursing them, and in bringing them up; in their grief and sorrow, when their children are any way diseased, as we may see by the tears of the father, and cry of the mother, which Mark and Matthew make mention of, Mark ix. 24, and vii. 25, Mat. xv. 22; in their kind embracing of them as here, and as did the father of the prodigal son; in their great joy to hear of their welfare, as Jacob did rejoice to hear of Joseph, Gen. xlv. 27, 28; in their easy natures, soon reconciled to their children, when they humble themselves before them, as we see in David to Absalom, and the father of the prodigal son; lastly, in their great lamentation at the death of their children, as David did for Absalom, though a most unnatural son, and the widow which followed her son to the grave, which Christ raised up to life again. No other reason can be given, but that natural and inbred love to children in parents, else some children are so hard-favoured and ill-conditioned, as parents could not so love them, but only for that they be their children. Let children hence learn to be thankful to God and their parents, and shew love to them again in all obedience.

*And became his nurse.* That is, a help in the mother's nursing of it, as by holding it, lulling of it asleep, giving of it meat, warming of it, and such like helps for the nourishing of the life of the babe, and not giving it suck, for she was too old to do this. We may find in Scripture two sort of nurses: dry nurses; such a one was Rebekah's, Gen. xxiv. 59, to help to attend on the child, and to ease the mother somewhat, as Naomi doth here; and in helping to nourish and bring up a child; in this sense a father is called a

nurse, Num. xi. 12. The other sort are milk-nurses, such as give suck unto children, as in Scripture we find only those to be their mothers, even them that bare them, to bring them up also, that as they afforded them the womb to bear them, so the breasts likewise to give their children suck. And this is the mother's duty, if possibly she be able; not birth, wealth, nicety, nor idleness can exempt them from this duty, as it doth a number of wanton dames, that they may be fitter to follow their lusts. That mothers are to give their own children suck, it is apparent by these reasons; the natural instinct in beasts teacheth every other creature having paps to give suck; yea, the sea monsters draw out their breasts and give suck to their young ones, saith Jeremiah, Lam. iv. 3; and therefore, such as neglect this duty, are worse than these beasts, which we hold unkind if they let not their young ones suck. It is the principal use and end of breasts in women, when God sendeth them children, though too many now make them only stales and bawds of lust. The workmanship of God should make them do this: First, in placing them so high, as in no other creature, even neighbouring upon the heart, the shop of heat, to convey the blood sooner into the breasts; so as the heart works for the infant, to teach mothers to have affection to this work. Secondly, so placing them, as the mother is taught in nature to embrace the infant, to lay it to her breast, the more to work love between the mother and the babe. Thirdly, in making them to have this faculty to turn blood into milk. And lastly, God's providing, as soon as the infant is perfect for birth, milk in the breast for the infant; so as God and nature call them to this duty, except any will say that God hath done all this in vain, and might have spared his workmanship. The very name of a breast, *mamma*, should put them in mind hereof, the first syllable whereof is that which an infant doth soonest speak, calling the mother *mam;* as if nature had given this first to the babe, so easily to frame, to utter this word, to put the mother in mind of her duty, and to give it her breast. Again, God in the work of nature hath not only given breasts, but heads or nipples for the infant to suck the milk out of her breasts; and to help it, hath made the skin about the nipples more rugous and rough for the child's tongue to hold by. The heathen philosophers, endued but with the light of nature, teach this,* and affirm, that the mother's milk implants in children the love of mothers; yea, mothers love commonly those children better, which they nurse, than the rest; and reason may be given, because the mother giveth, and the child receiveth, by sucking her breasts, more of her substance, than they which do not. Children love their nurses, we see by experience, and better than their mothers that bare them, so long as they be without judgment to discern, and only follow nature for the nourishment of life. It is not so natural, say also these heathen, to be nursed of another, as of the mother, in whom it is conceived; for differing bodies have differing temperature, and therefore the taking away of the infant so soon from the accustomed nourishment in the mother, must needs breed an alteration. A learned man* thinks this to be the cause of the degenerating so much of great men's sons, and of their so little love to their mothers. It is a token of no great love to children, when their mothers put them over to strangers; it is just with God, if mothers after find their children over strange to them, being but rather half than whole mothers,† mothers of necessity, and not of good will; for perforce they bring forth, but it is true love which maketh a mother to give suck; safety to themselves desireth the former, or else to die with it in the womb; but love only to the infant procureth this latter at their hands. Besides all these reasons, the examples of all the godly women in Scripture teach mothers now this duty. That right honourable Sarah, the wife of a most honourable man, and mighty in substance and power, nursed her son Isaac, Gen. xxi. 7. Princely Job was nourished by the breasts of her whose womb did bear him, Job iii. 12; queen Bathsheba nursed Solomon, Cant. viii. 1. What shall I speak of holy Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 23, the mother also of Moses, Exod. i., of Samson's mother, Judges xiii. 42, and others? The mother of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, whom all do honour, she did give her blessed babe suck; all women call her blessed because she bare Christ. And was she not as blessed in giving him her breasts to suck? Luke xi. 27. Yes, verily. Some good ladies at this day disdain not this duty. And what should hinder them? Such persons may give suck, and then deliver the child over to a dry nurse to attend it in all other things, which help the poor cannot have. Lastly, as there is a blessing of the womb to bring forth, so of the breasts to give suck, Gen. xlix. 25; and the dry breasts and barren womb have been taken for a curse, Hosea ix. 14. Let mothers, therefore, take knowledge of these things, to press them to this duty of nursing their own bowels, that, in giving still of their own substance, they might the more work love in their children towards them. Their excuses are idle, and are of no force against these reasons, for true motherly love is seen in nursing; for lust brings to conceive, necessity forceth to bring forth, but only true and natural love causeth a mother to nurse her child.

Ver. 17. *And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

Here is the naming of the child which was born of Ruth, where note who named it, the reason, the name thereof, and what he came to be, shewed in his honourable and royal posterity in his son and grandchild.

* Arist. and Plutarch.

* Kick. in his Oecono. † Note this, you unnatural mothers!

*And the women her neighbours.* The women here are those before in ver. 14, very godly and religious, as appeareth by many things before spoken of. These godly women were Naomi and Ruth's neighbours, such as dwelt together with them, as the word (שכן) signifieth. Here may be noted who be fittest to be called to such businesses, the honest neighbours and kinsfolk, as was at the birth and circumcision of John Baptist; for kinsfolk they expect it, and have therein an interest and cause of rejoicing in the increase of their lineage, and therefore may not be carelessly neglected. And neighbours are to be called, as those which be nigh at hand and helpful at need, who, being near, are better, as Solomon saith, than a brother far off. But here, observe farther, what manner of neighbours they were which these godly women had, even such as themselves, for godly women delight to have about them such as themselves, for the wicked and they cannot accord; they have differing heads and hearts. Over the one God ruleth, over the other Satan; the one is regenerate in heart, the other unregenerate, and therefore cannot but jar in word and deed, the one being an abomination to the other, as Solomon speaketh, Prov. xxix. But the godly having one head, Jesus Christ, and one heart, Acts iv., they will reap benefit one of another, by instructing, admonishing, comforting, and praying one for another. Therefore, to shew yourselves godly, be ye delighted to have them about you.

*And gave it a name.* It is said the women gave it. We find that sometimes the fathers gave the name, as Abraham to his son, whom he called Isaac; mothers often, as we may see in Leah and Rachel, Gen. xxix. and xxx.; so kinsfolk now and then, as we may note out of Luke i. 58, 59. And here in Ruth the neighbours gave it, yea, sometime a stranger named the child upon just occasion, as Pharaoh's daughter did give the name of Moses to him, which the parents did not alter; so as it seemeth this was not strictly stood upon, though most commonly the parents give the name. If any here ask concerning the time when children were named, I find that it was sometime at the birth of the infant; so Rachel, Gen. xxxv. 18, and the wife of Phinehas, 1 Sam. iv. 21, gave their children names upon their departure; but being in such cases, it seemeth not to be ordinary. It may be thought to be usually at the time when the child was circumcised, as we may perceive at the naming of Isaac, Gen. xxi. 4, and John the Baptist, Luke i. 59. And thus do we give names at the baptizing of infants, that as they did, so we may put children in mind of the covenant made in baptism, of their badge of Christianity, and of their ingrafting into Christ, and how they were admitted as God's children into the household of faith, and as heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

*There is a son born to Naomi.* That is, for the good and comfort of Naomi, as is before shewed out of the 15th verse, and as may be gathered by the like phrase elsewhere, Isa. ix. 6, Luke ii. 11; so as in these words is a reason of the name which they gave unto the child. Whence note that the godly in ancient time gave names, not by hap-hazard, but as good reason did lead them thereunto; for they gave names in obedience to God's commandment, who appointed sometimes names unto children; to know also whence they were and whence taken, Gen. xvii. 19 and xxi. 3, Luke i. 13. Thus Adam was so called of the matter whereof his body was made; so Moses of the place whence he was taken. Some had a name from their miserable estate and condition, as *Enosh;* some to call to remembrance some favours of God. Thus *Simeon* was so called of his mother Leah, and Joseph for the like reason called his sons *Manasseh* and *Ephraim*. Sometime names were given from some thing which fell out at the birth; hence *Pharez* had his name, Gen. xxxviii. 29, and *Ichabod* his, 1 Sam. iv. Some were named so from that which should come to pass afterwards, as Solomon was, for that in his days should be rest and peace, 1 Chron. xxii. 9. Some had their names from some things to be effected and done by them; so was our 'Lord called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins,' Mat. i. 21. Besides these inducements to impose a name, they did sometime call them after their ancestors, to keep them in remembrance, Luke i. 59, 61. We must learn to imitate the holy men of God in these things, to express our own graces, or to teach our children some duties, or to call to mind the works of God, or to remember holy men and women, to imitate their virtues. And we may not think this to be too precise a practice, seeing God's wisdom interposed itself sometime, both in giving names and in changing of names; and the reverence due to the holy sacrament administered, adviseth us to a due consideration hereof in honour of the sacrament. And a good name may call sometimes a man to the remembrance of his duty. I know that a name maketh not a man good, for some have good names, but their condition stark naught: yet a good name may sometime occasion a man to think of goodness; and howsoever the party so named doth make no use of it, yet it is commendable in the imposers thereof, who imitate the example of godly men in the old time, the saints also in the primitive church, and the godly disposed at this day, which reproveth such as give names idly without sense or reason, ridiculous names, heathenish rather than Christian, and some such names as be very profane. But of this thus much.

*And they called his name Obed.* That is, as they gave him his name, so thus was he called; which words may imply that the name once given was with authority confirmed, so as the infant was commonly so called without alteration, neither were ever any names altered but upon some extraordinary occasion; for to suffer a change thereof is either folly or worse, if good and honest causes move not thereunto.

*Obed.* This signifieth *serving*, because he should serve as a comforter to old Naomi, as the women said, ver. 15, which is the reason of this name; to teach him and also all children their duty, which is this, to labour to be a comfort unto their parents, of which before in ver. 15. Now this they shall do if they live in obedience to their parents, with fear to offend, yielding ever to be ruled by them; if they seek to imitate their parents' virtues, and to follow them in all good things; if they frame their courses to godliness, striving to have an heavenly Father also for their guide and direction; if they settle themselves to a good course of life, to live within some honest calling, either in the church or commonwealth; if, lastly, they live in mutual love one with another, like Job's children. These things will comfort parents, which, therefore, let children labour for; let them be *Obeds*, serving thus to their comforts; let them be *Isaacs*, to make their parents to laugh for joy, and not *Benonis*, sons of sorrow, like *Cains*, *Esaus*, and *Absaloms*, wicked, profane, and unnatural.

Note here one thing more before I come to the next words, how that this child is not called either Elimelech or Mahlon; and yet was he given to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that might not be cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place, ver. 10, and for this end did Boaz marry Ruth; whence, therefore, we may perceive that the preservation of the name of the dead stood not in another's bearing of his name, so to be called as he was, but rather in the issue having a right to the inheritance and enjoying of it, that it might not be alienated from the kindred and stock of the dead. Which being so, sheweth the gross folly and wrong which some shew to their near blood, in disinheriting daughters and passing their inheritance unto mere strangers for a very bare name, as if that were to hold up their name, when oftentimes it cometh to pass that such sell away the inheritance, and so root out their name, which is better kept by continuing an inheritance in their blood and bowels than by the sound of a word upon the person of a stranger. This folly we see by examples to be condemned and cursed before our eyes in not a few.

*He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.* These words are added to shew, first, who this Obed was, or rather what a one he came to be in his posterity, even very honourable and of high renown. Here we see that as ancestors may grace posterity, so honourable offspring may grace ancestors and forefathers. Again, by these words we understand when this story was written, even in the days of David, and that also when he was chosen of God from his brethren; for else Jesse his eldest son should have been named, and not David, who was the seventh and youngest son of his father. Thirdly, these words shew whereto this history tendeth, to bring us unto David, that sweet singer of Israel, the chief type of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, not only of the Jews, but likewise of the Gentiles, of whom he was pleased to come, to be their Saviour also, as it appeareth to us at this day, blessed be God for ever. Amen.

Ver. 18. *Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Ram.*

Here is the last part of this book, and the conclusion of this chapter, containing a genealogy from Pharez to David, ten generations, as they be reckoned in order, in this and the rest of the verses, from the father to the son, and from the son to the end of the tenth generation. The occasion of this genealogy was from the last words of the former verse, speaking of Obed's being father to Jesse and grandfather to David; and to shew this the Holy Ghost beginneth a genealogy from before Obed's time, in seven of his ancestors, and descended to David his grandchild.

*Now these are the generations.* Usually the genealogies of the godly are recorded, but sometime the generation of the wicked, as of Ishmaël and Esau, are set down, Gen. xxv. 13, xxxvi 9, xxi. 13, and iv. 17–19; not so much for their sakes, as to shew the truth of God's promises made to the faithful concerning some of them, or to shew some wicked instruments in their posterity, as in the genealogy of Cain. The genealogy of the godly is set down for these ends: first, to shew how God registereth up his people in a book of remembrance, as being precious in his eyes; secondly, to shew how he hath had from time to time, throughout all ages, a race of righteous people, a peculiar generation to himself, in despite of Satan's malice and all his bloody instruments; thirdly, for help to chronology, as may be seen in Gen. v., from the lives of the patriarchs; fourthly, to shew the descent from the first Adam to the second, as appeareth in the evangelists, where Matthew entitleth his first chapter 'the book of the generation of Jesus Christ,' Mat. i., from Abraham to Joseph, and then Luke from Joseph to Adam, Luke iii. This genealogy here in Ruth is to teach the truth of Jacob's prophecy concerning Christ's coming of the tribe of Judah, for here it beginneth at Pharez, Judah's son, and descendeth to David, the royal prophet and type of Christ; also to shew why the house of Pharez was so extolled, in ver. 12, by the elders and people; and thirdly, to let us know for what end this story was written, not to praise and set out the virtues of a couple of poor women, but to shew from whom David came, the figure of Christ, even of Ruth, a Gentile, a Moabitess. Lastly, this may be to shew the efficacy of the prayer of the people at Boaz's marriage, wishing by this seed Obed his house to be as famous as Judah's house was by Pharez, as it was indeed. For, as Nahshon and Salmon, princes, came of him, so of this Obed came Jesse and David, and so a royal posterity.

*Of Pharez.* The catalogue beginneth here, and from this man, though misbegotten incestuously, the honour

of the families is fetched. For so in truth it was, the Lord making Pharez renewned in his posterity; whence note, first, that the holy writers are without partiality. They write as things be; they omit not, for fear of disgrace, that which is true and ought to be set down; they will not spare any, friend, foe, far off nor near, no, not themselves. Moses will write his own faults, his wife's, his brother Aaron's and Miriam's; Samuel will not slip over his son's miscarriage, nor Jonah his own rebellion against God, and his peevish brabbling with him; Jeremiah will record his own impatiency, and St Paul his bloody rage against the saints, for indeed they are led by a better spirit than that of the world; they also cast off self-love, and they prefer the truth and god's glory above all, which may persuade us to the reading of these holy histories full of varieties, and yet truths not to be found in any writings of men. And this should teach such as undertake to write stories, to deal truly, without fabling, and to avoid partial relations,* that we may read true histories, and not fictions and falsehoods, to the deceiving of the posterity, which should be thereby instructed. Secondly, that men hold themselves honoured to come of such as have gained honour in the world, though otherwise stained in their birth; for so here it is accounted honourable to come of Pharez, as many with us do, to come but into this island, which William the Conqueror obtained, how base soever he was by his birth; for outward honour and glory procureth estimation and becloudeth birth, so as that no notice is taken thereof. Now, if outward honour effect this, with what honour may we think ourselves honoured, when God, the emperor of heaven and earth, is willing to acknowledge us to be born of him, and to be called his sons? But of this few glory, because it is only spiritually discerned, and for that such as be so honoured with God find here many crosses, and so are in contempt with the worldly-minded.

Now, in handling the rest of the names, I will shew you out of them that as one naturally begets another, so the elect of God are to be qualified, one grace, as it were, producing another. The first in this natural generation is Pharez, which signifieth *separate;* so in the supernatural work of regeneration the elect must be first *Pharez*, separate by their effectual calling by the word and by the Holy Spirit in their conversation from the vain world, 2 Cor. vi. 17; for such are the children of God, and such ought they to be, as the apostle exhorteth, Eph. v. 11, or else we be not of this spiritual regeneration. Such then as are companions with wicked, and so live, they are no *Pharezes*, and so none of Christ's line.

* Nam quis nescit, primam esse historiæ legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat, deinde, ne quid veri non audeat, ne qua suspicio gratiæ sit in scribendo, ne qua simultatis?—*Cic. de Orat.*, lib. ii. *Vide* Josephum, Antiq. lib. xvi. cap. 11, ubi merito culpat Nichol. Damasceni historiam, Herodis res falsis laudibus ornantem.

Ver. 19. *Pharez begat Hezron.* So is it plain, Gen. xlvi. 12, Mat. i. 3, 1 Chron. ii. 5, who went down with Jacob into Egypt, Gen. xlvi. 26, contrary to the opinion of some popish writers. The name signifieth, *in the midst of happiness;* and such be the elect, after they become *Pharezes*. They must needs be *Hezrons*, full of joy; when they feel the benefit of their separation, they are glad people, even as the Israelites, separated from the Egyptians and their heavy bondage.

*Hezron begat Ram.* 1 Chron. ii. 9, Mat. i. This Ram or Aram was not Hezron's first-born, but Jerahmeel, to give us to know that the Lord tied not himself to the first-born, but he chose sometime the second, as here, and sometime the youngest, as David; and so he doth at this day, which is the cause of the difference of children, from one father and one mother, having the same education, some doing well, other some ill. The name signifieth *high;* for so are the elect with God, Deut. xxxii. 10, Zech. ii. 8; and being once *Hezrons*, joyful in the ways of God, they seek and set their minds on things above, as the apostle exhorts all risen with Christ to do, Col. iii. 1. They be not base-minded, to pore upon the world as earthworms, but are high-minded towards God and things above; they are of a generous spirit, not suffering the things below to tread down their affections, and to draw them from God.

*Ram begat Amminadab.* 1 Chron. ii. 10, Mat. i. He was father-in-law to Aaron, who married his daughter Elishebah, Exod. vi. 23. This name signifieth, *my people is noble* or *free*, and so are the elect; for having attained to this height, that they become *Rams* or *Arams*, they free themselves from the world, as far as it hindereth them from setting their minds on things above.

Ver. 20. *And Amminadab begat Nahshon.* 1 Chron. ii., Mat. i. Who was brother-in-law to Aaron, the head and prince of the tribe of Judah; which host consisted of 74,600 valiant men, the first standard, Num. i. 7, and ii. 3, and vii. 12. This first offered to the dedication of the altar, for the greatest should be the forwardest to God's service and to advance religion. This also first set forward with his charge towards Canaan, Num. x. 14; so should the greatest with their families set forward to heaven. This signifieth *experiment* or *trial*, for the elect of God having gotten to be *Amminadabs*, and become free, they taste of the Lord's goodness, and can say with David, Come and see what the Lord hath done for my soul. They keep in remembrance the kindness of the Lord, and can speak of his noble acts.

*And Nahshon begat Salmon.* 1 Chron. ii. 11, where he is called Salma; he married Rahab, Mat. i. 5. Thus in the line of Christ are brought in Gentiles for our comfort, of whom he came, as well as of the Jews, and is our kinsman, as well as theirs. This signifieth *peaceable*, and so are the elect; for after

they become *Nahshons*, experienced in God's goodness, they have a peaceable conscience, they have a quiet mind, without murmuring, without doubting, without gainsaying the will of God in anything which may happen, though it cross them in this world never so much; they be peaceable also towards others, because the wisdom from above, with which they are endued, is peaceable, James iii. 17.

Ver. 21. *And Salmon begat Boaz.* 1 Chron. ii. 11, of whom I have spoken before. It signifieth *in strength;* for when the elect are *Salmons*, that they find inward peace with God, and that they know God to be with them, then they say to their souls, as the angel to Gideon, 'Go in this thy strength;' for in the Lord they are valiant, and by his help may do worthily, being confident in God.

*And Boaz begat Obed.* 1 Chron. ii., Mat. i. Of this also before. It signifieth *serving.* Such are the Lord's elect, they are his servants; for when God hath made them *Boazes*, and put strength of grace into their hearts to withstand their spiritual adversaries, they will become obedient *Obeds.*

Ver. 22. *And Obed begat Jesse*, 1 Chron. ii. 13, Mat. i., who dwelt at Bethlehem, and was an ancient man in the days of Saul, 1 Sam. xvi. 1. This signifieth *a gift* or *offering;* and such be all true Obeds. When the elect become serviceable and obedient, the joy they feel in the Lord's service maketh them *Jesses*, even to offer themselves to God as holy and acceptable sacrifices, Rom. xii. 1.

*And Jesse begat David.* 1 Chron. ii. 13, 15, Mat. i. Of this kingly prophet and prophetical king I might speak more at large than might seem suitable to this brief exposition. I therefore refer you to the Books of Samuel, and the first of the Kings, and the first of the Chronicles, and to the Book of Psalms, which lively set out this holy man, a man after the Lord's own heart. His name signifieth *beloved;* and such are the Lord's elect, and they may know themselves to be so, God witnessing his love to them; for when they be once *Pharezes*, separated from the vain world; *Hezrons*, joyful and glad in this their separation; *Rams*, lifted up in mind to heavenly things; *Amminadabs*, a free people from spiritual thraldom, having gotten the spirit of adoption; *Nahshons*, experienced in God's love; *Salmons*, peaceable; and *Boazes*, going on in this their strength; and *Obeds*, obedient, and that freely, as *Jesses;* what doubt is there but they be *Davids*, even beloved of God?

To conclude this chapter, and so this whole history, we may here see how, from a mean estate, some can arise to great honour, as Ruth from gleaning to be the wife of Boaz, and the grandmother of a king and prophet. Thus poor Mordecai was exalted, and that on a sudden, from sackcloth into silken robes fit for a king, from fear and danger of death to great honour, and to be feared. And thus came Joseph from a prison, to be a prince in Egypt; and David from keeping sheep, to be the king of Israel; all which is the work of God, as Hannah singeth, 1 Sam. ii. 8, David publisheth, Ps. lxxv. 6, 7, and cxiii. 7, and Daniel teacheth, Dan. iv. 17. It is easy with the Lord suddenly to make a poor man rich, and to exalt him to honour. And therefore let such as be low not envy the advancement of others lifted up, it is of God; and let them not repine nor murmur to see themselves neglected, for if God held it good for such, and for his glory, to be lifted up, as he can do it, so, verily, he would do it as well as he doth others; for God respecteth no person, but doth what he pleaseth in heaven and in earth, and what is most for his glory, though we judge perhaps otherwise. Another thing may we note for the comfort of the godly, that great is the reward of religion. Ruth was of the Lord mercifully rewarded, as we have heard; so was Rahab by faith preserved, and all with her brought from among cursed Canaanites to be among the Israelites; yea, to become the wife of Salmon, a prince in Israel; and lastly, to be vouchsafed this mercy, to be recorded with the faithful in the catalogue of the most renowned, Heb. xi.; yea, and to be mentioned with Abraham for her good works, the fruit of true faith, James ii. What got David for his upright heart, though he seemed to be neglected of his parents, and sent to keep sheep, and not called to the feast till Samuel caused him to be sent for? Was not he for all that esteemed of God, and chosen before all his brethren? The Lord will not let goodness be unrewarded, for godliness hath the promise of this life, and of the life to come. And in this let all that truly fear God comfort themselves, and look up to the recompence of the reward, which in due time they shall receive to the full, if they faint not. Blessed be God, and his name be praised for ever more. Amen!

END OF BERNARD ON RUTH.

# FULLER ON RUTH.

A

# COMMENT ON RUTH.

BY

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# EDITORIAL NOTE.

It were altogether out of place to give a biographical notice of Thomas Fuller, one of the best known writers of his age, in connection with the reprint of one of the smallest of his numerous writings. It may be allowed us to mention that Mr Grosart, who has contributed so many biographical notices to the present Series, has in preparation a life of Fuller, which will be published shortly, prefixed to an edition of some of his writings, about to be issued by other publishers. T. S.

# A COMMENT ON RUTH.

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

## THE LADY ANNE ARCHER,

IN THE COUNTY OF WARWICK.

THE apostle to the Philippians, chap. iv. 15, giveth them this high commendation: None communicated with me concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. Should I apply the same in relation of myself to your ladyship, I should be injurious to the bounty of many my worthy benefactors. However, not exclusively of others, but eminently, I must acknowledge you a grand encourager of my studies. In public testimony whereof, I present these my endeavours to your ladyship's patronage.

Indeed, they were preached in an eminent place, when I first entered into the ministry, above twenty years since, and therefore you will pardon the many faults that may be found therein. Nor were they intended for public view, till, understanding the resolution of some of my auditors to print them (to their profit, but my prejudice), by their imperfect notes, I adventured on this seasonable prevention.

The Lord make his graces flow plentifully from the head of your family, your religious husband, to the lowest skirts thereof, the last and least of your relations!

Your ladyship's in all Christian offices,

THOMAS FULLER.

## CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land.*

Before we enter into these words, something must be premised concerning the name, matter, end, author of this book. It hath the name from Ruth, the most remarkable person in it, to whom God vouchsafed his grace, not only to write her name in the book of life in heaven, but also to prefix her name before a book of life in earth. The matter may be divided into these two parts: the first chapter sheweth, that many are the troubles of the righteous; and the three last do shew, that God delivereth them out of all. One of the ends is, to shew the pedigree of our Saviour, otherwise genealogers had been at a loss for four or five descents in the deducing thereof. Another end is, under the conversion of Ruth the Moabitess, to typify the calling of the Gentiles, that, as he took of the blood of a Gentile into his body, so he should shed the blood out of his body for the Gentiles, that there might be one shepherd and one sheepfold. The author's name (probably Samuel) is concealed, neither is it needful it should be known, for even as a man that hath a piece of gold that he knows to be weight, and sees it stamped with the king's image, careth not to know the name of that man who minted or coined it, so we, seeing this book to have the superscription of Cæsar, the stamp of the Holy Spirit, need not to be curious to know who was the penman thereof. And now to the words.

*Now it came to pass*, &c. Observe in the words,

What? *a famine.* Where? *in the land.* When? *in the time that the judges judged*, the time being set down for the better certainty of the history.

*Quest.* Is this the land whereof it is said, Gen. xlix. 20, 'Asher his bread shall be fat, and afford dainties for a king;' which is called, Deut. viii. 7, 'A good land of wheat and barley, vineyards and fig-trees, oil-olive, and honey;' which is commended, Ezek. xx. 6, to be 'a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands.' How cometh it to pass that thy rivers of oil are now dammed up? thy streams of wine drained dry, that there is no bread found in Bethlehem, the house of bread?

*Ans.* Israel hath sinned. 'A fruitful land maketh he barren, for the sin of the people that dwell therein.' The people's hard hearts were rebellious to God, and the hard earth proved unprofitable to them; their flinty eyes would afford no tears to bemoan their sins, and the churlish heavens would afford no moisture to water their earth. Man proved unfaithful to God his Maker, the earth proved unfruitful to man her manurer.

*Obs.* Famine is a heavy punishment, wherewith God afflicteth his people for their sins. That it is an heavy punishment appeareth, because David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, chose the pestilence before it; for even as Zebah and Zalmunna, Judges viii. 21, chose rather to fall by the hand of Gideon than by the hand of Jether his son, because the child's want of strength would cause their abundance of pain, so better it is to be speedily despatched by a violent disease, than to have one's life in a famine prolonged by a lingering torture. That it is inflicted for their sins is shewed, Lev. xxvi. 19, Deut. xxviii. 23, 1 Kings viii. 37; and these sins most especially procure famine. 1st, Idolatry: 1 Kings xvii. 1, 2 Kings iv. 36. 2dly, Abuse of plenty; the prodigal child, Luke xv., from the keeping of harlots was brought to the keeping of hogs. It is just with God to make men want that to supply their necessity which they have misspended in their nicety. 3dly, Shedding of innocent blood, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. 4thly, Oppression of the poor, Amos iv. 16. And no wonder if men, to grind the faces of poor people, make money, to which God gave no natural fruit, to bring forth a monstrous increase, if God cause the earth, which naturally should be fruitful, to become barren and afford no profit.

*Use* 1. It may serve to confute such, that when God doth scourge them with famine (as blind Balaam fell a-beating of his dumb beast when he himself was in fault), they vent their spite in cursing and railing on the poor creatures, whereas, indeed, were the matter well weighed, they might say of all creatures, as Judah did of Tamar his daughter-in-law, 'They are more righteous than we;' for locusts, mildew, blasting, immoderate drought, and moisture, are the means by which, man's sin is the cause for which, famine is inflicted. And yet in prosperity we are commonly like hogs feeding on the mast, not minding his hand that shaketh it down; in adversity, like dogs biting the stone, not marking the hand that threw it.

*Use* 2. If any desire to prevent or remove a famine, let us prevent and remove the causes thereof. First, let us practise that precept, 1 John v. 21, 'Babes, keep yourselves from idols.' 2dly, Let us be heartily thankful to God for our plenty, who, by the seasonable weeping of the heavens, hath caused the plentiful laughter of the earth, and hath sent the former rain to perform the part of a midwife, to deliver the infant corn out of the womb of the parched earth, and the latter rain to do the duty of a nurse, to swell and battle the grain. Let us not seethe the kid in the mother's milk; let not our wanton palates spoil wholesome meat before it cometh to the just maturity, neither let us cast away any good food, but after our Saviour's example, let us cause the fragments to be basketed up, that nothing may be left. 3dly, Let us pray, with David, Ps. li. 14, 'Deliver us from bloodguiltiness, O Lord;' and let us seek that the hoary hairs may not go down to the grave in peace of such as have shed innocent blood (lest the personal offence of a private man remaining unpunished become the national sin of a kingdom), but upon the king, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall be peace for ever from the Lord.

Lastly, Let us be pitiful and liberal to relieve the distresses of the poor, for why should our dead tables groan under the weight of needless feast upon them, whilst God's living temples groan under the want of necessary food within them? The Athenian women had a custom to make a picture of famine every year, and to drive it out of their city with these words, Out famine in food, out penury in plenty; but let us say in word and second it in deed, Out sin in sanctity, out profaneness in plenty, and then we shall see that as long as our King reigneth there shall be no famine in our land.

But however God shall dispose of us for outward blessings, I pray God keep us from that soul famine mentioned Amos viii. 12, that we, living under the northern heavens, should wander to the east, and run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and should not find it; but may the light of the gospel remain with us on earth as long as the faithful witness endureth in heaven!

*And a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab.*

These words contain a journey or removal, wherein observe, Who went? *a certain man.* Whence? *from Bethlehem-Judah.* Whither? *to sojourn in Moab.* We shall have a fitter occasion to speak of the party removing hereafter. I begin with the place from whence he went, Bethlehem-Judah.

This was the place nigh to which Rachel, as she was travelling, fell into travail, and ended her journey to heaven in the midst of her journey on earth. There

was another of the same name in Zebulon, Joshua xix. 15, and therefore *Judah* is added for difference and distinction.

*Obs.* The Holy Spirit descends to our capacity, and in Scripture doth multiply words to make the matter the plainer. Let this teach the sons of Levi, when they deliver one doubtful and ambiguous doctrine, which may admit of several constructions, so that there is danger lest that people may mistake their meaning, to demur a while on such a point, and not to be niggardly of their words, till they have blotted all doubt and difficulty out of it. Herein they shall follow God for their pattern, who, lest Bethlehem in my text should be confounded with Bethlehem in Zebulon, addeth for distinction Bethlehem-Judah.

*Went to sojourn in Moab.* The prodigal child complained, Luke xv., 'How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and I die for hunger!' so here we see that the uncircumcised Moabites, God's slaves and vassals, had store of plenty, whilst Israel, God's children (but his prodigal children, which, by their sins had displeased their heavenly Father), were pinched with penury.

*Obs.* Hence we gather, God oftentimes denies outward blessings to his children, whenas he vouchsafeth them to the wicked. The wicked man's eyes start out with fatness; David's bones scarce cleave to his flesh; Ahab hath an ivory house; the godly wander in dens and caves of the earth; the rich glutton 'fareth deliciously every day,' whilst the godly, Ps. cvii., were 'hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them;' he was 'clothed in purple and fine linen,' whilst the godly 'wander up and down in sheep's skins;' and well may they wear their skins without them that carry their innocency within them; and the reason thereof is, 'because judgment begins at the house of the Lord,' whilst 'the wicked have their portion in this world.'

*Use.* Let us not judge according to outward appearance, but 'judge righteous judgment,' lest otherwise we condemn the generation of God's children, if we account outward blessings the signs of God's favour, or calamities the arguments of his displeasure; neither let the afflicted Christian faint under God's heavy hand, but let him know to his comfort, God therefore is angry in this world, that he may not be angry in the world to come, and mercifully inflicteth temporal punishment, that he may not justly confound with eternal torment.

But here ariseth a question, whether Elimelech did well to go from Bethlehem-Judah into the land of Moab; for the better satisfaction whereof we will suppose a plain and honest neighbour thus dissuading him from his departure.

DISSUASION. Give me leave, neighbour Elimelech, to say unto thee as the angel did to Hagar, Whence comest thou, and whither goest thou? Wilt thou leave that place where God's worship is truly professed, and go into an idolatrous country? 'Woe is thee that must dwell in Moab, and be an inhabitant amongst the worshippers of Melchom.' Indeed, our father Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees, an idolatrous country, to come into the land of Canaan; but why shouldst thou go out of the land of Canaan into an idolatrous country, where thou shalt have neither priest nor prophet nor passover? Yea, what most is to be feared, your frequent conversing with the people of the country will at length bring you into a love and liking of their superstitions, and so draw God's anger against you; wherefore reverse your intent of removing, lest while thou seekest to store thy body, thou starvest thy soul; rather venture the breaking of the casket, than the losing of the jewel, and go not from Bethlehem-Judah unto the land of Moab.

ANSWER. To this Elimelech might answer: Your dissuasion doth somewhat move me, but not remove my resolution. I do not forsake my country, but am forced from it; God hath withholden the wine and the winepress, and if I stay, I am likely to starve. I conceive it therefore to be my bounden duty to provide the best means for my family; and following the examples of Isaac's going into Gerah, and Jacob's going down into Egypt in the time of famine, I intend to remove to Moab. And though I shall be divided from the visible congregation of Israel, yet shall I with my family still remain the lively members of God's true church. For, first, I intend to carry with me the five books of Moses (they will be no great burden, being comprised in so small a volume), and according to my poor ability, out of them will I instruct my family, whilst my dear wife Naomi, and dutiful children, Mahlon and Chilion, will be diligent to hear and practise what I propound unto them. I confess we shall have no outward sacrifices (because I am not of the tribe of Levi), yet may we offer unto God prayers and praises, which God no doubt will as graciously accept, as of a bullock that hath horns and hoofs. Thus hope I to have a little church in mine own house; and I know, 'where two or three are met together in the name of God, there he will be in the midst of them.' Whereas you object I should be in danger of being defiled with their idolatry, I will be by God's grace so much the more wary, watchful, and vigilant over my ways. We see the flesh of fishes remaineth fresh, though they always swim in the brackish waters, and I hope that the same God who preserved righteous Lot in the wicked city of Sodom, who protected faithful Joseph in the vicious court of Pharaoh, will also keep me unspotted in the midst of Moab, whither I intend speedily to go, not to live, but to lodge; not to dwell, but to sojourn; not to make it my habitation for ever, but my harbour for a season, till God shall visit his people with plenty, when I purpose to return with the speediest conveniency.

Thus we see Elimelech putting the dangers of his removal in one scale, the benefits thereof in another.

The beam of his judgment is justly weighed down to go from Bethlehem-Judah into the land of Moab.

*Obs.* It is lawful for men to leave their native soil and to travel into a foreign country, as for merchants, provided always that while they seek to make gainful adventures for their estates, they make not shipwreck of a good conscience.

2dly, For ambassadors that are sent to see the practices and negotiations in foreign courts.

3dly, For private persons that travel with an intent to accomplish themselves with a better sufficiency to serve their king and country; but unlawful it is for such to travel which, Dinah-like, go only to see the customs of several countries, and make themselves the lacqueys to their own humorous curiosity. Hence cometh it to pass, when they return, it is justly questionable whether their clothes be disguised with more foolish fashions, or bodies disabled with more loathsome diseases, or souls defiled with more notorious vices; having learned jealousy from the Italian, pride from the Spaniard, lasciviousness from the French, drunkenness from the Dutch; and yet what need they go so far to learn so bad a lesson, when (God knows) we have too many schools where it is taught here at home!

Now if any do demand of me my opinion concerning our brethren which of late left this kingdom to advance a plantation in New England, surely I think, as St Paul said concerning virgins, he had 'received no commandment from the Lord.' So I cannot find any just warrant to encourage men to undertake this removal; but think rather the counsel best, that king Joash prescribed to Amaziah, 'Tarry at home;' yet as for those that are already gone, far be it from us to conceive them to be such, to whom we may not say, 'God speed,' as it is in 2 John ver. 10; but let us pity them, and pray for them, for sure they have no need of our mocks, which I am afraid have too much of their own miseries. I conclude therefore of the two Englands, what our Saviour saith of the two wines, Luke v. 39, 'No man having tasted of the old, presently desireth the new; for he saith the old is better.'

*He, and his wife, and his two sons.*

*And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah: and they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.*

These words contain, first, the principal party that undertook the journey; 2dly, his company, described by their relations, his wife and children, and by their names, Naomi, Mahlon, and Chilion; 3dly, the success of his journey, When he came into the land of Moab, he continued there.

Now whereas Elimelech took his wife and children along with him, from his practice we gather this observation.

*Obs.* It is the part of a kind husband, and of a careful father, not only to provide for himself, but also for his whole family: Gen. ii. 24, 'A man shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh;' Eph. v. 25, 'Husbands, love your wives; for no man as yet hated his own flesh;' 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any one provideth not for his own family, he denieth the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' This made Abraham to take with him at his removal his meek Sarah, Isaac his wife Rebekah, Jacob his fair Rachel and fruitful Leah, and Joseph, Mat. ii., took with him Mary, his espoused wife, and our Saviour, his supposed son. And when Pharaoh, Exodus x. 9, offered Moses with all the men of Israel to go out of Egypt, but on condition they should leave their wives and children behind them, Moses refused the proffer; he would either have them all go out, or else he would not go out at all.

*Use.* It confuteth such cruel husbands and careless parents, who, if so be with Job's messengers they only can escape alone, they care not though they leave their wives and children to shift for themselves, like the ostrich, Job xxxix. 14, who 'leaveth her eggs in the sand,' and so forsakes them. Surely the two kine which drew the ark of God out of the land of the Philistines to Bethshemesh, 1 Sam. vi. 12, shall rise up at the day of judgment and condemn such cruel parents; for it is said of them, 'that as they went along the highway, they did pitifully low,' by that querulous ditty, as nature afforded them utterance, witnessing and expressing their affection to their calves shut up at home. Oh that there should be such humanity (as I may term it) in beasts, and such beastliness in many men! Remember this, you that sit drinking and bezzling wine abroad, whilst your family are glad of water at home, and think thus with yourselves, To what end is this needless waste; might it not have been sold for many a penny, and have been bestowed on my poor wife and children?

*Obs.* Secondly, Whereas we find Naomi and her sons going with Elimelech, we gather, it is the duty of a dear wife and of dutiful children to go along with their husband and parents, when on just cause they remove into a foreign country. It was an unmanly and cowardly speech of Barak to Deborah, Judges iv. 8, 'If thou wilt go with me, then will I go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then will I not go;' but it would be a gracious resolution of a grave matron and her children, 'Husband, if you be pleased to depart, I will be ready to accompany you; father, if you be minded to remove, I will attend upon you; but if you be disposed to stay, I will not stir from the place where you abide.' Otherwise, if the wife refuseth to go along with her husband, what Abraham, Gen. xxiv. 8, said to the servant in another case, is true in this respect: 'But if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from thine oath.' If the wife be so peevish and perverse, that she will not go along with her husband, who propoundeth law-

ful means unto her to relieve her wants, then is he acquitted from the oath he made her in marriage, when he plighted his troth unto her, in sickness and in health to maintain her.

*Quest.* But methinks I hear the widows and orphans crying unto me, as the soldiers to John the Baptist, 'But what shall we do?' Luke iii. It is true, saith the widow, that kind husbands are to provide for their wives, but, alas, we have no Elimelechs to carry us into a foreign country in the time of famine. Indeed, saith the orphan, it is the father's duty to provide for his children; but my parents are dead long ago, I have not, as Samuel had, a mother Hannah every year to bring me a new coat. What shall we do in this our distress?

*Ans.* Use the best means you can, and for the rest rely on God's providence, who is said, Ps. x. 20, to 'help the fatherless and poor to their right;' Ps. lxviii. 5, to be 'a father to the fatherless, and to defend the cause of the widow, even God in his holy habitation;' who will deal with thee as he did with David: 'When my mother and father forsook me, the Lord cared for me.'

So much for Elimelech's company, described by their relations. We should come now to speak of their names, where we might take occasion to speak of the antiquity and use of names; but that hereafter we shall have better conveniency to treat thereof in those words, 'Call me not Naomi, but call me Mara.' We come therefore to the success of Elimelech's journey.

*And they came into the country of Moab, and they continued there.* The meaning is, that the Moabites afforded them harbour without any molestation.

*Obs.* From whence the observation is this, we ought to be hospitable and courteous to receive strangers. First, because God in several places of Scripture enjoineth it, Exod. xxiii. 9, Levit. xix. 33. 2dly, because God apprehendeth all courtesy done to a stranger, as bestowed on himself: 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me,' &c.; 'I was a stranger, and ye harboured me,' Mat. xxv. And then, if we entertain strangers, it may be said of us, not only as it is of Lot and Abraham, Heb. xiii. 2, that we 'entertained angels,' but that we entertained God himself 'unawares.' 3dly, Because, if spiritually considered, we ourselves are strangers with the patriarchs: Heb. xi., 'We have here no abiding city, but seek one from above, whose builder and maker is God.' 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims,' 1 Peter ii. 11. Lastly, because of the uncertainty of our own estates, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth; it may be we that now relieve strangers, hereafter ourselves being strangers may be relieved by others.

*Use.* Let us not therefore abuse strangers and make a prey of them, making an advantage of their unskilfulness in the language, and being unacquainted with the fashions of the land, like Laban, that deceived his nephew Jacob in placing Leah for Rachel, and to cloak his cheating, pleaded it was the custom of the country. Wherefore rather let us be courteous unto them, lest the barbarians condemn us, who so courteously entreated St Paul, with his shipwrecked companions, and the Moabites in my text, who suffered Elimelech, when he came into the land, to continue there.

Vers. 3–5. *And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons, &c.*

In these words we have two marriages ushered and followed by funerals. I will begin there, where one day all must make an end, at death.

*And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died.* I have seldom seen a tree thrive that hath been transplanted when it was old. The same may be seen in Elimelech: his aged body brooks not the foreign air; though he could avoid the arrows of famine in Israel, yet he could not shun the darts of death in Moab. He that lived in a place of penury, must die in a land of plenty. Let none condemn Elimelech's removal as unlawful, because of his sudden death; for those actions are not ungodly which are unsuccessful, nor those pious which are prosperous, seeing the lawfulness of an action is not to be gathered from the joyfulness of the event, but from the justness of the cause for which it is undertaken.

*Obs.* 1. Hence we observe that God can easily frustrate our fairest hopes, and defeat our most probable projects, in making those places most dangerous which we account most safe and secure, causing death to meet us there, where we think furthest to fly from it.

*Obs.* 2. We see that no outward plenty can privilege us from death; the sand of our life runneth as fast, though the hour-glass be set in the sunshine of prosperity, as in the gloomy shade of affliction.

*And she was left, and her two sons.* Here we see how mercifully God dealt with Naomi, in that he quenched not all the sparks of her comfort at once; but though he took away the stock, he left her the stems; though he deprived her as it were of the use of her own legs, by taking away her husband, yet he left her a staff in each of her hands, her two sons to support her. Indeed, afterwards he took them away, but first he provided her a gracious daughter-in-law whence we learn God poureth not all his afflictions at once, but ever leaveth a little comfort, otherwise we should not only be pressed down, but crushed to powder under the weight of his heavy hand.

*And they took them wives of the women of Moab, &c.* Here we see the fashion of the world. Mankind had long ago decayed, if those breaches which are daily made by death were not daily made up by marriage. But here ariseth a question, Whether these matches were lawful? For answer whereof, we will suppose Naomi dissuading her sons on this manner.

DISSUASION. What, my sons! and what, persons of

my womb! and what, the sons of my desire! give not your strength to strange women, and your ways to that that destroyed men. It is not for you, O Mahlon and Chilion, it is not for you to marry Moabites; nor for the sons of an Israelite to marry the daughters of the uncircumcised. Remember, my sons, what God saith by the mouth of Moses, Deut. vii. 3, 'Thou shalt not make marriages with them, thy daughter shalt thou not give to his son, nor take his daughter to thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following me, to serve strange gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against thee to destroy thee suddenly.' Take heed, therefore, lest long looking on these women, you at length be made blind, lest they suck out your souls with kisses, and snake-like sting you with embraces; curb your affections until you come into Canaan, where you shall find variety of wives, who as they come not short of these for the beauties of their bodies, so they far go beyond them for the sanctity of their souls.

ANSWER. To this dissuasion thus might her children answer: We thank you, dear mother, for your carefulness over our good; but we must entreat you not to interpret it undutifulness, if upon good reason we dissent from your judgment herein. In the place by you cited, marriages are forbidden with such strange women as are of a stubborn, obstinate, and refractory nature, such as are likely to seduce their husbands; whereas you see the mild, towardly, and tractable disposition of these women we mean to make our wives; we hope to plant these wild branches in God's vineyard, to bring these straggling sheep to his fold, to make them proselytes to our religion. Besides, this marriage will be advantageous for us, thereby we shall endear ourselves into the Moabites' affections; they will use us the more courteously, when we have married one of their own kindred.

But methinks my tongue refuseth to be any longer the advocate of an unlawful deed, and my mouth denieth to be the orator of an unjust action. When I have said what I can for the defence of their marriage, I shall but make a plaster too narrow for the sore; the breach is so broad I cannot stop it, though I may dam it up with untempered mortar. Nothing can be brought for the defence of these matches; something may be said for the excuse of them, but that fetched not from piety, but from policy; not certain, but conjectural; yet here may we see the power and providence of God, who made so good use of these men's defaults, as hereby to bring Ruth, first to be a retainer to the family of faith, and afterwards a joyful mother in Israel. This is that good chymic that can distil good out of evil, light out of darkness, order out of confusion, and make the crooked actions of men tend to his own glory in a straight line, and his children's good.

I speak not this to defend any man's folly in doing of evil, but to admire God's wisdom, who can bring good out of evil; and surely he that will turn evil to good will turn good to the best.

*And they dwelled there about ten years.* Here we have the term of Naomi's living in Moab, and the famine's lasting in Israel ten years. We read of a famine for three years, 2 Sam. xxi., of three years and a-half, 1 Kings xvii., of seven years, Gen. xlii., as also 2 Kings viii, but this ten years' famine longer than any. Seven years which Jacob served for Rachel seemed to him but a short time; but surely those ten years seemed to the afflicted Israelites, and to the banished Naomi, as so many millions of years.

*Obs.* God doth not presently remove his rod from the back of his children, but sometimes scourgeth them with long-lasting afflictions. The reason is, because we go on and persist so long in our sins; and yet herein even mercy exalteth herself against judgment; for if God should suffer the fire of his fury to burn, so long as the fuel of our sins do last, Lord, who were able to abide? Were the days of our suffering apportioned to the days of our living,* no flesh would be saved, but for the elect's sake those days are shortened.

*Use.* Bear with patience light afflictions, when God afflicteth his children with long-lasting punishments; mutter not for a burning fever of a fortnight. What is this to the woman that had a running issue for twelve years! Murmur not for a twelvemonth's quartan ague; it is nothing to the woman that was bowed for eighteen years; nor seven years' consumption to the man that lay thirty-eight years lame at the pool of Bethesda.

*And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them.* It was but even now that old Elimelech was gone to bed. See, his sons would not sit long up after the father; only here is the difference: he, like ripe fruit, fell down of his own accord; they, like green apples, were cudgelled off the tree.

*Obs.* Even young men in the prime of their age are subject to death. The sons of Jacob, when they came to the table of Joseph, sat down, the eldest according to his age, and the youngest according to his youth. But death observes not this method; she takes not men in seniority, but sometimes sends them first to the burial that came last from the birth, and those that came last from the womb first to their winding-sheet. There were as many lambs and kids sacrificed in the Old Testament as goats and old sheep, but surely more there be that die in infancy and in youth than of those that attain to old age.

*Use.* 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' You whose joints are knit with sturdy sinews, whose veins are full of blood, whose arteries are flushed with spirits, whose bones are fraught with marrow, Obadiah-like, serve God from your youth; put not the day of death far from you; think not your strength to be armour of proof against the darts of death, when

* Qu. 'sinning'?—ED.

you see the corslet of Mahlon and Chilion shot through in the left. So Mahlon and Chilion died both of them.

*And the woman was left of her two sons and of her husband.* Before, we had the particular losses of Naomi, now we have them all reckoned up in the total sum. A threefold cable, saith Solomon, is not easily broken; and yet we see in Naomi's threefold cable of comfort, twisted of her husband and her two sons, broken by death. Of the two sex, the woman is the weaker; of women, old women are most feeble; of old women, widows most woful; of widows, those that are poor their plight most pitiful; of poor widows, those that want children their case most doleful; of widows that want children, those that once had them, and after lost them, their estate most desolate; of widows that have had children, those that are strangers in a foreign country, their condition most comfortless. Yet all these met together in Naomi, as in the centre of sorrow, to make the measure of her misery pressed down, shaken together, running over. I conclude, therefore, many men have had affliction, none like Job; many women have had tribulation, none like Naomi.

Ver. 6. *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.*

These words contain two general parts:

1. God's visiting his people with plenty.
2. Naomi's visiting of her people with her person.

I begin with the first, in the order of the words, 'Then she arose with her daughters-in-law,' &c.

*Obs.* We must tarry no longer in an idolatrous land, when God offereth us an occasion to return into our own country; for so long as we tarry in an idolatrous land on a just cause, so long we are in our vocation and in God's protection; but when God openeth us a gap to return, and we will not through it, we are neither in our calling nor God's keeping, but must stand on our own adventures; and who knows not how slenderly we shall be kept when we are left to our own custody? Let not therefore Joseph, with his wife and son, tarry any longer in the land of Egypt, when he is dead that sought the life of the child.

Examples we have of those which in the days of Queen Mary fled beyond the seas, though they were not in a paganish, only in a foreign country: Mr Scorey, Cocks, Whitehead, Grindall, Horne, Sandys, Elmore, Gest, Jewel. If fear lent them feet to run when they went away, joy gave them wings to fly when they came home again. Let none, therefore, pretend in needless excuses to linger in the land of Egypt, when they may return into the honey-flowing land of Canaan.

*For she had heard in the country of Moab.* I suppose when any messenger arrived in Moab out of the land of Canaan, Naomi did presently repair unto him, and load him with questions concerning the estate of her country. How do the Jews my countrymen? How fareth it with the Bethlehemites my neighbours? with Boaz my kinsman? What is the rate of corn? what the price of oil? what the value of wine? If there be no performance for the present, what promise is there for the future? Though things be bad now, what hope is there but they will be better hereafter? Alas! he answers little; and from his silence and sorrowful looks Naomi gathers a denial. But as Elijah sending his servant towards the sea to see what signs there were of rain for six several times together, he returned this answer, 'There is nothing;' but at the seventh time, he brought him the tidings of a cloud rising out of the sea, 1 Kings xviii. 43; so though for nine years Naomi had no news but of want and scarcity, yet the tenth year there came a man (probably he was a good man that brought these good tidings) who brought her word that the valleys began to laugh and sing with plenty; and so though the hope that was deferred was the fainting of the heart, yet when it came, it was the tree of life. Perchance because the covetous Jews had made nine parts great for their own profit, and the tenth small, to cozen God of his portion; God, quite contrary, gave them nine years of scarcity and want, and at length made the tenth of store and plenty.

*Obs.* The fame of remarkable accidents will fly into foreign countries; for if it be bad news, the wicked will be sure to tell it in the gates of Gath, and publish it in the streets of Askelon. If it be good, the godly will proclaim it in the courts of Zion, and disperse it within the walls of Jerusalem; whether good or bad (if it be of moment and importance), it will not be covered nor concealed.

*Question.* Is it lawful for us to listen, hearken, and inquire after matters of foreign countries?

*Ans.* Though I would not have men to be like the Athenians, to hear or tell some new thing, yet it is both lawful and laudable for them to inquire after foreign affairs, whereby they express the desire that they have of the welfare of their distant brethren, the members of the same mystical body. Example, Neh. i. 2. And yet would I have men (though they lend their ears) not to bestow their belief on every groundless report which is blazed abroad.

1. Because fame is often untrue, relating, 2 Sam. xiii., that 'all the king's sons are killed,' when only Amnon is slain.

2. Because many there be which, with the soldiers, Mat. xxviii., do nothing but invent and disperse lies to gull over-credulous people. And as many a benighted traveller hath wandered out of his way whilst he followed for his lantern the meteor of foolish fire, so many a man hath been deceived by embracing of lying relations instead of true news. Yet in case that Cushi and Ahimaaz confirm the same thing, that variety of messengers, from divers places, of sundry sides, and several factions, all agree in material and

substantial points, we ought not to be like unbelieving Thomas, to trust no more than our eyes have seen, but may rely on the truth of such relations, and ought accordingly to be affected with sorrow if the news be bad, or joy, if the tidings tend to the church's good and God's glory.

*That God had visited his people.* This was the privilege of the people of the Jews, that they were styled God's people; but now *Ammi* is made *Lo-ammi*, and *Ruhama Lo-ruhama*, and we the Gentiles are placed in their room. Let us therefore remember the words of St Paul, Rom. xi. 21, 'Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches of the olive, fear that he will not spare thee also.'

Oh that he would be pleased to cast his eye of pity upon the poor Jews, which for fifteen hundred years and upwards have wandered without law, without Lord, without land, and as once they were, so once again to make them his people!

*In giving them bread.* By *bread* is meant all sustenance necessary for the maintaining of our lives, whereof bread is the chiefest. As the temple of Dagon principally leaned on two pillars, and fell to the ground when Samson took them away, so the building of our bodies chiefly relies on bread and water for outward sustenance, which being taken away, cannot but presently decay. Let others, therefore, wish those dishes which curiosity hath invented, rather to increase than satisfy hunger, which are more delightsome to the eye than pleasing to the palate, yet more pleasing to the palate than wholesome to the stomach; let us pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.'

Bread is a dish in every course; without this can be no feast, with this can be no famine.

*Obs.* God's punishments, though they last sometimes long, yet always they end at last; and yet sometimes, for the manifestation of his power, and trial of his children's patience, he suffers them to be brought into great extremities. Abraham's hand shall be heaved up to slay Isaac, before the angel shall catch hold of it; Lazarus shall be three days dead, before Christ will raise him; the ship ready to sink, before our Saviour will awake; Peter must be drenched in the water, before our Saviour will keep him from drowning; St Paul must be in the lion's mouth, before he shall be delivered out of it; the famine must last ten year, before God will give them bread.

An example hereof we have in our neighbouring churches of Germany, which long have been afflicted under the tyranny of their oppressors; and now at length a sun is risen out of the north, and after a long night, the morning beginneth the day. And thou, Swedeland, shalt not be counted the meanest amongst the kingdoms of Europe, for out of thee did a prince arise, who hath delivered the distressed protestants, who, at his first landing, seemed to his enemies an object fitter of their scorn than opposition. They thought our youthful David too unequal a match to cope with their general, who had been a man of war from his youth; but as verity consisteth not in the plurality of voices, so victory standeth not in the multitude of soldiers; but God so ordered it, that he that had the best cause had the best success. I dare boldly say that all the protestant princes and states of Germany will be ready truly to say of him what Tertullus spake flatteringly of Felix, Acts xxiv. 2, 'Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we always accept it, and in all places, most noble prince, with all thankfulness.' But let us turn our praises of him into prayers for him, that he who hath conquered his foes may subdue himself, not to be puffed up with his good success. 'So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let all them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.' And as ever I have earnestly desired, so now do I stedfastly hope to see the day when our Naomi (our worthy Naomi, more fruitful in miseries than in children, and in virtues than in both) shall arise, to return out of the land of Holland with her prince and progeny, when she shall hear that in the land of Holland God hath visited the Palatinate, and given them rest.

Vers. 7, 8. *And she went out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return into the land of Judah. And Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother.*

These words contain the continuation of Naomi's return; wherein we may observe,

First, The company that went with her, 'her two daughters-in-law.'

Secondly, The discourse she had with this company, consisting of a precept in the text, 'Go, return each of you to her mother;' and of a prayer, in the words following.

Now whereas her daughters-in-law did not take their farewell of Naomi at the threshold of their house, but went part of the way with her, we gather,

*Obs.* That all offices of kindnesses and courtesies ought to be betwixt the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, I mean her son's wife. And yet look into the world, and ye shall commonly find enmity betwixt them, as saith Terence in Hessera, *Neque declinatam mulierem reperias ab aliarum ingenio; ità adeò uno omnes animo socrus oderunt nurus.* And their fallings out chiefly proceed from these two causes:

First, They contend which should have the greatest right and interest in the man, who is son to the one, husband to the other. Judah and Israel contested (2 Sam. xix. 43) which should have most part in king David, the former claiming it because he was bone of their bone; the latter pleaded they had eleven parts in him to Judah's single share. Thus mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws use to fall out. The mother, because her son is flesh of her flesh and bone of her

bone, pleads it is right that he should side and second with her; the daughter-in-law, because he is her husband, and therefore one flesh, challengeth that he should rather take her part; so, betwixt them, they fill the family with all discord.

Secondly, they fall out about the managing of the matters in the household, after whose mind they should be ordered; but as St James said in another case, 'Beloved, these things ought not to be so.' Both these brawls may be easily ended. The first may be taken up by the wisdom and discretion of the son-in-law, who ought so indifferently to poise his affections betwixt them both, with such dutifulness and respect to the one, such love and kindness to the other, that neither may have just cause to complain. And the second controversy may thus be decided: If the mother hath the state still in her hands, good reason it is she should rule the affairs, and that the daughter-in-law should wait till her mother-in-law's natural death hath paved the succession to the governing of the family; but if the old woman hath resigned her estate, and confined herself to an yearly pension, then ought she not to intermeddle with those matters, from which she had willingly sequestered herself. Were this observed, there would not so many daughters-in-law rejoice when the day of mourning for their mother-in-law is come, some whereof say, as the wicked said of David, 'Oh when will she die, and her name perish?'

Now to come to the discourse she had with them.

*Go, return*, &c. Where ariseth a question, whether Naomi did well in persuading her daughters to go back unto Moab? For the satisfaction whereof I will set down, first, what may be said against; secondly, what may be brought for her defence.

ACCUSATION. Why, Naomi, why didst thou quench the zeal of thy daughters, which proffered themselves so willingly to go with thee? Oh, rein them not backward with dissuasions, but rather spur them forward with exhortations, and strive to bring them out of an idolatrous land to a place where God's worship is purely professed. Say unto them, Hearken, O daughters, and consider; incline your ears, forget also your country and your own mother's house, so shall the Lord your God have pleasure in you. True it is ye have a mother in Moab, but what of that; care not for your mother, but care for your Maker; care not for her that conceived you, but care for him that created you. Tarry not with them, no, not so much as to express your last love in performing their funerals; rather let the dead bury their dead. Those that are dead spiritually, let them bury such as die naturally, and come go ye along with me to the land of Canaan. Thus, Naomi, oughtest thou to have said, and then hadst performed the part, done the duty of a mother. If, whilst thou hadst travelled with them on the way, thou hadst travailed with them till God had been formed in them, then shouldst thou shine as a double sun in heaven for saving of two souls, whereas now thou art in a manner accessory to their ghostly murder, in sending them back to an idolatrous country.

DEFENCE. To this accusation Naomi might justly answer, It is my heart's desire and prayer to God that I may be an instrument of my daughters-in-laws' conversion; but the wisdom of the serpent, as well as the innocency of the dove, is to be used in all our actions, lest we draw needless danger upon ourselves. True it is, my daughters-in law proffer to go with me; but here is the question, whether this is done out of courtesy and compliment, or out of singleness and sincerity? Now should they, through my persuasions, go into the land of Canaan, and there live in want and penury, they will be ready to rail on me another day. We may thank Naomi for all this; we had plentiful provisions in our own country, but she must have us hither; she, by her restless importunity, must wring a constrained consent from us to come into Canaan. All these miseries are befallen upon us through her default. Yea, I am afraid that, finding want, that they again will return into their own country to my shame, the scandal of our religion, and the deeper punishment of their own souls; wherefore without their minds would I do nothing, that their going might not be, as it were, of necessity, but willingly. To which end I will put them to the touch-stone, to see whether their forwardness be faithful or feigned, sound or seeming, cordial or counterfeit. I will weigh them both in the balance, hoping that neither shall be found too light.

Upon these grounds learned men have acquitted Naomi from any fault in managing this matter, she doing it only with an intent to try them.

Whence we may observe, that pagans that proffer themselves to become converts, are not without proof presently to be received into the church.

And here we may take occasion to digress a little, to shew how Christians ought to behave themselves in the converting of infidels.

First, They must strive, in their mutual conversing with them, to season them with a good opinion of their honesty and upright dealing; otherwise their doctrine will never be embraced, whose manners are justly misliked.

Secondly, Having possessed them with this good esteem, they ought, as occasion is offered, to instruct them in the rudiments of Christian religion, and to begin with such as are plain and evident by the light of nature, and so in due time to proceed to matters of greater difficulty.

Lastly, they are to pray to God to give his increase to their planting and watering; for, as Athanasius saith, it is a divine work to persuade men's souls to believe.

But as for the using of tortures and of torments, thereby to force them, 'we have no such custom, nor as yet the churches of God;' for though none come to Christ but such as his Father draws by the violence

of his effectual grace, yet ought not men to drive or drag any to the profession of the faith; yet notwithstanding, if, after long patience and forbearing with them, and long instructing them in the points of religion, if still these pagans continue refractory and obstinate, then surely the civil magistrate, who hath the lawful dominion over them, may severely, though not cruelly, with Josiah, compel them to come to church, and to perform the outward formalities of God's worship.

Go, then, ye bloody Jesuits, boast of those many millions of Americans whom you have converted, who were not converted by the sword of the mouth, gained by hearing the gospel, but compelled by the mouth of the sword, forced by feeling your cruelty. Witness those seventy thousand, which, without any catechizing in the points of religion, were at once driven to the font like so many horses to a watering-trough. Indeed, I find my Saviour, John ii., driving the merchants out of the temple with a whip of cords, but never before did I read of any which against their wills drave uninstructed pagans to the font to be baptized.

*Each to her mother's house.* Here we see widows, if poor, are to be maintained by their parents if they be able. These widows, 1 Tim. v. 16, were not to be burdensome to the church, but to be relieved by their own country.* Let parents therefore take heed how they bestow their daughters in marriage; for if they match them to unthrifts and prodigals, will it not be bitterness in the end? The burden will fall heavy on their backs, when their poor daughters with their children must be sent again to their fathers to maintain them.

*House.* Widows are to contain themselves within the house; not like the harlot, Prov. vii. 12, always in the streets, but like meek Sarah, in the tent; whereby they shall sooner gain the love and esteem of others; for let base and beggarly fellows buy that rascal ware which is hung out at the doors and windows of shops and stalls, whilst men of quality and fashion will go into the shop to cheapen the worth of those merchandise as are therein kept secret and concealed. And so surely all discreet and grave men will have the highest esteem and bear the best affection to such women, which do not gad abroad to be seen, but with Ruth and Orpah, being widows, keep themselves in their mother's house.

Vers. 8, 9. *The Lord shew favour unto you, as ye have done with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that you may find rest, either of you in the house of her husband.*

Naomi being ready to take her leave of her daughters, fain she would leave them something for which they might be the better after her departure. But gold and silver she had none, yet such as she had she freely gave unto them, hearty prayers. Whence we learn, it is the best expression of a grateful mind, to pray to God for the welfare of those at whose hands we have received greater courtesies than we can requite.

*As ye have done.* Hence we learn, God, in the rewarding of the good deeds of his servants, dealeth with them accordingly as they have done with others. Yet far be it from us to suppose, that in our stained and imperfect works there is any meritorious virtue, which deserveth that God should proportion a reward unto them; but this freely proceedeth from God's favour, who to encourage us in well-doing will not suffer a cup of cold water to pass without its reward. Do we desire, then, to have dutiful children and faithful servants hereafter? Let us be dutiful to our parents, faithful to our masters. On the other side, hath God afflicted us with Zibahs to our servants, and with Absaloms to our sons? Let us reflect our eyes on that which is past, and call ourselves to account whether we formerly have not been unfaithful to our masters, undutiful to our parents; no doubt we may then take up the confession of Adoni-bezek, 'As I have dealt with others, so the Lord hath done to me.'

*With the dead.* Here ariseth a *Question*, How can one shew favour to the dead, who being past sense are not capable of kindness or cruelty?

*Ans.* The papists (who leave the souls of most men departing from hence, like Absalom's body, hanging betwixt heaven and hell) expound it, that these women did fast and pray for the souls of their deceased husbands, that they might be delivered from torments, and in due time brought to happiness in heaven. For the confutation of which erroneous exposition, I need say no more than that the Scripture makes no mention of any such middle place wherein the souls of the godly should be detained before they go into heaven; and in matters of faith, every Christian may safely say, Except I see in the Bible the print thereof, or can feel it deduced out of it by undeniable consequence, I will not believe it.

It is strange to see what impertinent places are produced by Bellarmine to prove praying for the dead, as James v. 16, 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed; the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' Then he endeavoureth to prove that the dead pray for the living, from the parable of Dives, Luke xvi. 27, 'I pray thee, therefore, father,' where Dives was charitably solicitous for the good of his surviving brethren. But let the first place in St James be perused by impartial judgments, and it obligeth mutually the dead saints to confess to us as well as we to them, which being impossible, directeth us to confine the words only to reciprocal confessing and praying to and for the living.

Some will say, Bellarmine having sufficiently proved purgatory before (which necessarily inferreth prayers for the dead), he might be the briefer in that subject.

* Qu. 'kindred'?—ED.

It is confessed many arguments are alleged by him to that intent, though to small purpose, as Ps. lxvi. 22, 'We went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.' We answer, first, the living there speak *de præterito*, we went, not *de futuro*, we shall go. Secondly, it was literally meant of the children of Israel; they went through the fire when envassalled to work in the Egyptian brick-kilns, and through water when miraculously they passed through the Red Sea; again they went through fire, when, preserved from the stinging of the fiery, they beheld the brazen, serpent. Thirdly, if from *fire* in this text any can kindle a purgatory, others will quench it from the word *water*, seeing no papists ever fancied a watered purgatory.

They urge the place Mat. v. 26, 'Thou shalt by no means come out from thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing,' importing, say they, a possibility, on satisfaction, to be freed thence, that is, from hell fire.

Answer. *Until* there is not taken *terminatively*, but *extensively*, equivalent to *never* or *not at all*; paralleled to that place, Ps. lvii. 1, 'In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.' What, would David depart from God after his deliverance? Would he use him as travellers a bush —come under it in a storm, and leave it in fair weather? No, surely; David would trust in God until that time, and at that time, and in that time, and after that time, and at all times. Parallel also to that place of Mat. i. 25, 'And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son;' it being the constant tradition of antiquity, according to the proportion of faith, and embraced by the papists themselves, that Christ's mother lived and died a spotless virgin.

Much stress he layeth on that passage of the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 15, 'He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.' This place, saith Bellarmine, is *locus utilissimus et difficillimus*, most profitable and most hard.

We answer, first, in general, seeing by the Jesuit's confession it is so hard a place, it is utterly improbable that purgatory (being of so high concernment to every soul, as papists would persuade us) can be therein intended; for all matters necessary for men to know and believe, wherein the safety of every single soul is interested (such as purgatory is pretended to be), is, by the confession of all divines, expressed in plain and pregnant texts of Scripture. For want whereof Bellarmine is fain to shroud and shelter himself under the most obscure places, alleging a text most dark and difficult by his own confession.

Secondly, That fire there meant by St Paul, is affliction in this life. As for such fathers who expounded it *de igne conflagrationis*, of that *fire* which should burn up all things at the end of the world, it makes nothing for the patronising of purgatory in the popish notion thereof.

Come we now to find an office, and make an inquiry, how many things a dying godly man leaves behind him in this world. His soul is sent before him, and Rev. xiv. 13, 'From henceforth blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' He leaveth behind him,

First, His *body*, to which we must be kind, by burial and lamentation.

Secondly, His *estate*, to which we must be kind, by careful and faithful administration.

Thirdly, His *children*, *friends*, or *kindred*, to whom we must be kind, by love and affection.

Fourthly, His *faults* and *failings*, to which we must be kind, by silence and suppression.

Fifthly, His *memory* and *virtues*, to which we must be kind, by congratulation, commemoration, and imitation.

Of these in order. For although these words, 'Ye have been kind to the dead,' are capable of this sound sense, You have been kind to your husbands, who now are dead, whilst they were living, yet because more seemeth imported therein, we will prosecute the aforesaid particulars.

I say, *first*, his *body*, to which there is due burial and lamentation. *Burial*, and that according to the quality and condition wherein he lived. We read of king Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 33, 'They buried him in the chiefest (in the Hebrew, in the highest) sepulchres of the sons of David.' It must be allowed that the sepulchre of David his father was higher than his; and next David, Hezekiah's. Oh that height might be but measured by true holiness! There was an officer amongst the Greeks, whose place it was to measure monuments according to the standard of the men's merits therein interred. Such officers, if used in England, would pare off great parcels from some tombs, more proportioned to the parties' wealth than virtues. But nothing could be abated of Hezekiah his monument, all the dimensions whereof were due to his devotion.

And *lamentation*. Surely, of all the godly that ever departed this life, God's servants had the least cause to bewail the death of St Stephen. For, first, whereas there is a threefold degree of certainty of salvation: first, that of hope, which as the least and lowest scarce deserveth to be styled certainty; secondly, that of evidence, whereby the person clearly in his soul apprehendeth God's favour; thirdly, that of vision, peculiar to this Stephen alone, ante-dating his happiness with his bodily eyes, being in heaven before he was in heaven. So that as many gates in his wounded body stood open to let out his soul, he beheld alive the heavens opened to receive it. And yet we read, Acts viii. 2, 'And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.' Observe, it was not said, they made great lamentation *for* him, but *over* him, they knew him in a happy condition. It was themselves they bemoaned in his death, the sight of his corpse sharpening their sorrow, that

the infant church had lost one of her best swaddling-clothes.

*Secondly*, His *estate*, to which we must be kind by careful and faithful administration. Heb. ix. 17, 'For a testament is of force after men are dead;' Gal. iii. 15, 'Though it be but a man's covenant,' or testament, 'yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.' No *man*. He must either be less than man in knowledge, a mere beast; or more than man in malice, a mere devil. By testament I understand not only the very words thereof, but also what appeareth to be the testator his will to the conscience of the executor. How many in this kind are cruel to the dead! so that some of the legacies bequeathed by them have had a thumb or a toe, yea, some an arm or a leg, cut off from them. Many legacies which came sound forth from the testator, before they could get through the executors have been more lame and maimed than the cripples in the hospital to whom they have been bequeathed.

*Thirdly*, His *children*, or (because Mahlon and Chilion had none of them) his kindred or friends, to whom the living must be kind with love and affection. Remember the character of the good wife, Prov. xxxi. 12, 'She will do her husband good, and not evil, all the days of her life.' We have many wives only negatively good, pleasing and praising themselves in this, that they do their husbands no hurt. This will not do the deed, they must be positively profitable. Nor is it said, all the days of *his* life, but all the days of *her* life. What if he dieth, her obligation to him is not cassated or nulled (as many wives generally conceive), but still continueth all the days of her life. True it is she is set free so far as she may marry again in a competent time without the least shadow of sin; yet so as still obliged to do good all her lifetime to the friends, to the children (if any) of her dead husband; and he, if surviving her, reciprocally engaged to do the like.

*Fourthly*, The best men leave *faults* and *failings* behind them; to these the living must be kind by silence and suppression.

First, Of those of whom thou canst say no good, say nothing.

Secondly, Of those of whom thou canst say some good, say no bad.

David is a most excellent instance hereof, 2 Sam. i. 24. Who could more, or more justly have inveighed against Saul than David? 'O ye daughters of Israel, rejoice for the death of so great a tyrant, who killed Ahimelech, the high priest, and fourscore more of God's priests, whose souls were as clear from treason as the white linen ephods they wore were from spots. Twice I had him at my mercy, once in the cave, once when asleep, yet he (notwithstanding all his fair promises to the contrary) was the more cruel to me for my kindness to him.' No such matter; David conceals what was bad, remembereth what was good in Saul, at leastwise what would make his memory acceptable with the weaker sex, namely, his making of gallantry fashionable amongst them: 'Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.'

*Fifthly*, Memory of his virtues, to which three things are due to make thee kind thereunto.

First, Congratulation. I will touch this string but tenderly, not so much because fearing mine own fingers (as if the lesson should be false I play thereon), but expecting other men's ears as ill-disposed with prejudice. It is no popery nor superstition to praise God for the happy condition of his servants departed: the ancient patriarchs, the inspired prophets, the holy apostles, the patient martyrs, the religious confessors. When the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh erected the altar ED at the passage over Jordan, it startled all the rest of the tribes, as if under it they had hatched some superstitious design; whereas, indeed, the altar was not intended for sacrifice, but was merely an altar of memorial, to evidence to posterity that these two tribes and a half (though divided from the rest by the river of Jordan) were conjoined with them in the worship of the same God. In like manner, when some ministers thank God for the departure of his servants, some people are so weak, and some so wilful, to condemn such for passages of popery, as if superstitious prayers were made for their departure; whereas, indeed, such congratulation on the contrary speaks our confidence on their present bliss and happiness, and continueth the church militant with the church triumphant, as completing one entire catholic church of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Commemoration is due to the memories of the deceased. Hence the ancient custom of funeral orations, continued in our modern practice, both to the honour of the dead and profit of the living.

Thirdly, Imitation of their virtues. It hath been a great question amongst such who desire to express themselves thankful to their dead ancestors, of what metal or matter to make their monuments, so as they may be most lasting and permanent. Wise men have generally decried silver and brass, not so much because too costly (such may be the worth and wealth of the executors and party deceased), but too tempting to sacrilege to demolish them. Brass is generally subject to the same mischief, and marble touch and alabaster are generally used for that purpose; but the monument less subject to casualty, is to imitate the virtues of our dead friends. In other tombs the dead are preserved, in these they may be said to remain alive.

When we see a child very like to the father and mother thereof, we use to say, Thy father will never be dead as long as thou livest. Thus it is the best remembrance of our dead progenitors to follow their virtues. St Paul cannot look upon Timothy but pre-

sently calls to mind his mother Eunice, and his grandmother Lois, though the latter no doubt long since departed.

*The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband.* Here we may observe, first, that it is the part of pious parents to pray to God for the good success of their children, especially in the matter of their marriage: example in Abraham, Gen. xxiv. 7. Secondly, hence we may gather that the life of married persons meeting together in the fear of God is rest.

*Obj.* How then cometh it to pass that many men and women may take up the words of Rebekah, 'Seeing it is so, why am I thus?' Gen. xxv. If the married life be rest, how cometh it to prove my purgatory, my hell, my cause of restless torment? Men and women were joined in marriage, Gen. ii., to the end to be a mutual help one to the other; but many prove such helpers as the king of Ashur did to Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxviii., of whom it is said, 'he distressed him, but helped him not.'

*Ans.* Who can hinder it, if men of their girdles and garters make halters to hang themselves? If those things which should be for their strength and ornament, be through their own default turned to their utter undoing, the estate of marriage is not herein to be blamed, but the folly of such who out of some sinister ends undertake it. Haply some choose their wives like as our grandmother Eve did the apple, because they are pleasant to the eyes to be looked upon; others out of a love of their wealth, saying of their wives what the Shechemites did of the sons of Jacob, 'Shall not all their herds and cattle be ours?' Whereas if grace and piety were principally respected in their choice (other outward accommodations in their due distance not neglected) they would find the truth of our observation, that a married life is rest. For though some petty brawls may happen amongst the most sanctified couple, which may move their anger, yet shall it not remove their love, if one with Christian discretion beareth with the infirmities of the other. Joab made this compact with his brother Abishai, 2 Sam. x. 11, 'If the Aramite be stronger than I, thou shalt help me; but if the Ammonites be too strong for thee, I will come and succour thee.' Thus ought man and wife to make a bargain, with their best counsel to and prayers for each other, to assist themselves mutually against their sundry weaknesses and infirmities, which otherwise would turn the rest of their life into unquietness.

Ver. 9–13. *And when she kissed them, they lift up their voices and wept,* &c.

*And when she kissed them.* Kisses was the ordinary salutation of the Jews at the meeting of acquaintance, men with men, women with women, men with women, provided that then they were of near kindred, to avoid all suspicion of unchastity.

*And they lift their voices and wept.* The observation here may be the same which the Jews collected, John xi., which, when they saw our Saviour weep for Lazarus, they said, 'Behold how he loved him!' So these tears in this place were the expression of their affection. Sorrow, like the river of Jordan, 1 Chron. xii., 'in the first month did overflow the banks,' and streamed water down their cheeks.

*But Naomi said, Turn again my daughters,* &c. In these words she dissuadeth her daughters-in-law from returning with her; the strength of her reason contained in three verses may thus be set down, as if she had said, Haply, daughters, you have heard that it is the custom in the land of Canaan for childless widows to marry their deceased husband's brothers; but if your return be grounded hereon, know that you build your hopes on a false foundation, it being impossible for me, by the course of nature, to have any more sons. Who will look that water should flow from a dry fountain, grapes grow on a withered vine, fruit flourish on a dead fig-tree? Though Sarah at ninety was made a mother, though Aaron's rod did bud and blossom when it was dry, I myself should be a miracle if I should expect such a miracle, and therefore know that there are no more sons in my womb.

*Doct.* Now, whereas Naomi dealeth thus plainly with her daughters, not feedeth them with false hopes, it teacheth us this, we ought not to gull our friends with the promises of those things that neither will nor can come to pass, otherwise we shall both wrong our friends, who the higher they are mounted upon the hill of seeming hopes, at length the deeper they will be cast into the dale of real despair; and also we shall wrong ourselves when time, the mother of truth, shall unmask us, we shall prove ourselves to be no better than liars and cheaters.

*Use.* Let us labour to be Nathanaels, 'true Israelites, in whom there is no guile;' and as John Baptist, whenas the pharisees asked him whether he was the Christ or no, John i. 20, 'He confessed, and denied not; and said plainly, I am not the Christ;' so if we neither mean to do, nor know that such things cannot be done, which our friends request of us, let us confess, deny not, and say plainly that their suits cannot, shall not be granted; and by such downright dealing we shall at last get more favour from them than they who flatter them with their tongue. Let not the physician, when he reads in the urinal those dismal symptoms which are the ushers of death, still promise life and health unto his patient, but plainly tell him that there is *mors in olla*, that so he may fly unto the physician of the soul for a better life when this shall fade. Let not the lawyer, when he knows the case is desperate, feed his client with false hopes to recover it, that so from him he may be fed with money, but rather let him advise him to 'agree with his adversary while he is in the way,' that though he cannot get the conquest, yet he may have the easier composition.

*For I am too old to have a husband.* Here ariseth a question.

*Quest.* Is there any age so old wherein a man or woman may not marry?

*Ans.* Naomi's meaning was not simply and absolutely that she was too old to marry, but she was too old to have a husband, and by a husband to have children, and that those children should grow up and make fit husbands for Orpah and Ruth. Yet, by the way, I would advise such who are stricken in years, especially if impotency be added unto age, and that it may stand with their conveniency, to refrain from all thoughts of a second marriage, and to expect that happy day when death shall solemnise the nuptial betwixt their soul and their Saviour. For when Barzillai hath counted eighty years he hath even had enough of the pleasure and vanity of the world; let him retire himself to a private life, and not envy his son Chimham to succeed to those delights, of which his age hath made his father incapable. Yet if any ancient persons, for their mutual comfort and society (which is not the least end for which marriage was ordained), are disposed to match themselves herein, they are blameless; especially if they have a care to observe a correspondency of age with those to whom they link themselves. Otherwise, as our Saviour noteth, when the old cloth was joined to the new it made no good medley, but the rent was made the worse; so when the spring of youth is wedded to the winter of age, no true comfort can arise from such unequal yokes, but much jealousy and suspicion are caused from the same.

*Would ye tarry for them?* That is, you would not tarry for them, or if you should tarry for them you should wrong yourselves, and do unadvisedly, because in the mean time refraining from the using of God's ordinance you expose yourselves to the devil, to tempt you to incontinency. Therefore St Paul's counsel is good, which he prescribes in 1 Tim. v. 14, 'I will therefore that the younger women,' &c.

*While they were of age.* Note from hence that children are not to be married in their nonage, before they are arrived at years of discretion. Tamar, Gen. xxxviii., is to wait till Selah be grown up, Those parents are therefore to be blamed, who, out of by-respects, match their children in their infancy. Whence it cometh to pass, that as their age doth increase their mind doth alter, so what formerly they did like afterwards they do loathe, such marriages proving commonly most unsuccessful.

*Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes.* As if she had said, it grieveth me much that you are already plunged into poverty, but it would add more to my sorrow if you should increase your calamities by returning home with me. For mine own part, my misery troubleth me not so much, because the sun of my life is ready to set, and it mattereth not though the ship be scanted of victuals when it is hard by the harbour; all my care is for you, who are young women, and stand upon your own preferment. It grieveth me much for your sakes.

*Doct.* See here, such is the ingenuous nature of God's children, that they sorrow more for others that are enwrapped with them in a common calamity than for themselves. Example in Elias, 1 Kings xvii. 20. But then it goeth nearest to their heart when others are not only afflicted with them, but also for them, when they themselves are the principal malefactors for whose defaults others are punished, as in David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.

*Uses.* It may confute the devilish nature of such, who being in trouble care not though they pawn their dearest friends in their stead, so be it they themselves may escape. And it may also serve to comfort those that are in distress, when God only layeth his punishments on them alone, and doth not involve others together with them. Art thou afflicted with poverty? Comfort thyself that though thou beest poor, yet thou hast undone none by suretyship for thee. Art thou in sickness? Be glad that thy disease is not infectious, and that thou hast not derived the contagion to others. Doth God punish thee for thy sin with a personal punishment? Be glad that thou bearest the weight of thine own offence, and that thou are not the Jonah for whose private sin a whole ship of passengers is endangered to be cast away, for then their case would grieve thee more than thine own calamity.

*That the hand of the Lord.* Naomi here taketh especial notice that her losses proceeded from no other by-causes, but from the hand of God. As David therefore asked the widow of Tekoah, 2 Sam. xiv., 'Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?' so when any affliction befalleth us, let us presently have recourse unto God, and say, Is not the hand of the Lord the principal cause hereof? and not with the priests o the Philistines say, 'It was a chance that happened us.'

*Is gone out against me. Obs.* Hence we may observe, every saint of God, in a common calamity, is to think that God aimed at his punishment, and intended his reformation in particular. The hand of the Lord was gone out also against Orpah and Ruth in taking away their husbands, yet Naomi appropriateth the stroke to herself, 'Is gone out against me.'

How contrary is this to the practice of the world! Men in a public and general affliction, each shifteth it off from themselves, and no one man will be brought to confess that his sins are punished, or his amendment intended in particular, if the scourge be universal. As the Philistines, 1 Sam. v., posted the ark of God from Ashdod to Ekron, from one place to another, and none would receive it, so in a common calamity none will acknowledge that he himself is especially interested in it, but plead, 'What is that to us? Let others look unto it.' Oh, saith the people, God hath justly sent this plague for the corruption of the magistrates.

It is justly inflicted, saith the magistrate, for the disobedience of the people. Herein, saith the poor man, God hath met with the oppression and extortion of the rich. Herein, saith the rich man, God hath paid home the muttering and the repining of the poor. Now, saith the prodigal, God punisheth the covetousness of old men. Now, saith the old man, he scourgeth the prodigality of such as be young. Far otherwise Naomi, who though the arrows of God did glance and rebound to the wounding of Orpah and Ruth, yet she thought she herself was the mark at whom God did level his shafts: 'The hand of the Lord is gone out against me.'

Ver. 14. *And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her.* These words contain two general parts.

First, A blazing meteor falling down out of the air: *and Orpah*, &c.

Secondly, A fixed star fairly shining in the heaven: *but Ruth*, &c.

*And Orpah kissed her mother.* Is this she which even now was so promising in her words, and so passionate in her weeping? See how soon a forward professor may turn to a fearful apostate; though she standeth or falleth to her own master, yet as the psalmist saith, 'I am horribly afraid for those that forsake thy law;' so have we just cause to suspect the fearful final estate of Orpah.

*Kissed her mother.* That is, gave her this last salutation of her departure. Here we see that those who want grace and true sanctity, may notwithstanding have manners and good civility. Now had Orpah changed the corporal kiss she gave to her mother, into a spiritual kiss to her Saviour,—Ps. ii., 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,'—her case had been as happy as now it may seem to be hopeless. But leaving her, we come to ourselves, and gather this doctrine.

*Doct.* Those who at the first were forward in religion, may afterward altogether fall away, 1 Tim. i. 20, Heb. vi. 4, Mat. xiii. 20. It may therefore serve to abate the proud carriage of such, who as if it were not enough to be sure, will also be presumptuous of their salvation, and thereby take leave and liberty to themselves to live more licentiously.

*Obj.* But as once one of the children of the prophets cried out to Elisha, 'O man of God, there is death in the pot,' so may the weak Christian complain against this doctrine. Oh it is a deadly and dangerous one, containing much matter of despair, too bitter for the palate of a poor Christian to taste, or his stomach to digest; it quencheth all the sparks of my comfort, and hacketh asunder all the sinews of my hope. I fear lest, Orpah-like, I also should fall away. What shall I do that I may be saved?

*Ans.* Let not the smoking flax be dismayed, which in time may be a blazing flame, nor the bruised reed be discouraged, which may prove a brazen pillar in the temple of God. That therefore thou mayest finally persevere, observe these four rules.

*Rule* 1. First, Utterly renounce all sufficiency in thyself. Who but a madman will now-a-days warrant the paper shields of his own strength, that knows that Adam's complete armour of original integrity was shot through in paradise?

*Rule* 2. Secondly, Place all thy confidence on the undeserved mercy of God. Perseverance cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor as yet from the south, but God suffereth one to fall, and holdeth up another. The temple of Solomon had two pillars: one called *Jachin*, sounding in Hebrew, *the Lord will stablish;* the other *Booz*, signified *in him is strength.* So every Christian (the temple of the Holy Ghost) is principally holden up by these two pillars, God's power and will to support him; wherefore in every distress let us cry out to God, as the disciples did to our Saviour in the midst of a tempest, 'Help, Master, or else we perish.'

*Rule* 3. Thirdly, use all those means which God hath chalked out for the increase of grace in thee, as prayer, meditation, reverent receiving the sacraments, accompanying with God's children, reading, hearing the word, &c.

*Rule* 4. Fourthly, always preserve in thyself an awful fear, lest thou shouldst fall away from God. Fear to fall and assurance to stand are two sisters; and though Cain said he was not his brother's keeper, sure I am, that this fear doth watch and guard her sister assurance, *Tantus est gradus certitudinis, quantus solicitudinis.* They that have much of this fear, have much certainty; they that have little, little certainty; they that have none, have none at all. It is said in building, that those chimneys which shake most, and give way to the wind, will stand the longest. The moral in divinity is true. Those Christians that shiver for fear by sins to fall away, may be observed most courageous to persist in piety.

*Comfort.* To those that diligently practise these rules, I will add this comfort. Encourage thyself that God will keep thee from apostasy unto the end, because already hitherto he hath preserved thee; for God's former favours are pawns and pledges of his future love. David's killing of a lion and a bear, were the earnests of his victory over Goliath. Thus St Paul reasoneth: 2 Cor. i. 10, 'Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.' When Rachel bare her first son, Gen. xxx., she called him *Joseph*, and said, 'The Lord shall add to me another son.' So when God hath already blessed us and supported us for the time past, let us say with Rachel, *Joseph*, 'the Lord will add,' he will not stay, or stint, or stop here; but as he hath kept me from my mother's womb, and ever since I was born, so I trust he will not forsake me when I am aged, and full of grey hairs.

But to return to her which returned again to Moab.

We read in 2 Sam. xx. that the people which passed by the corpse of murdered Amasa, being moved with such a hideous and uncouth a spectacle, they stood still. But when we read this book of Ruth, and come to Orpah's apostasy, there let us a while pause and demur, to read in her fall a lecture of our own infirmity. For if we stand, it is not because we have more might in ourselves, but because God hath more mercy on us. Let us therefore 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling,' ever trembling, lest we should be cast to hell; ever triumphing, that we shall come to heaven; ever fearful, lest we should fall; ever certain, that we shall stand; ever careful, lest we should be damned; ever cheerful, that we shall be saved. Concerning Ruth's perseverance, we intend to treat hereafter.

Ver. 15. *And Naomi said, Behold thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law.*

In these words Naomi seeks to persaude Ruth to return, alleging the example of Orpah, whom she saith was 'gone back to her people and to her gods.'

*Obs.* Where first we find that all the heathen, and the Moabites amongst the rest, did not acknowledge one true God, but were the worshippers of many gods; for they made every attribute of God to be a distinct deity. Thus instead of that attribute, the wisdom of God, they feigned Apollo the god of wisdom; instead of the power of God, they made Mars the god of power; instead of that admirable beauty of God, they had Venus the goddess of beauty. But no one attribute was so much abused as God's providence. For the heathen, supposing that the whole world, and all the creatures therein, was too great a diocese to be daily visited by one and the same deity, they therefore assigned sundry gods to several creatures. Thus God's providence in ruling the raging of the seas was counted Neptune; in stilling the roaring winds, Æolus; in commmanding the powers of hell, Pluto; yea, sheep had their Pan, and gardens their Pomona; the heathens then being as fruitful in feigning of gods, as the papists since in making of saints.

*Doct.* Now because Naomi used the example of Orpah as a motive to work upon Ruth to return, we gather from thence, examples of others set before our eyes are very potent and prevalent arguments to make us follow and imitate them: whether they be good examples; so the forwardness of the Corinthians to relieve the Jews provoked many: or whether they be bad; so the dissembling of Peter at Antioch drew Barnabas and others into the same fault. But those examples, of all others, are most forcible with us, which are set by such who are near to us by kindred, or gracious with us in friendship, or great over us in power.

*Use* 1. Let men in eminent places, as magistrates, ministers, fathers, masters, and the like (seeing that others love to dance after their pipe, to sing after their tune, to tread after their tract), endeavour to propound themselves patterns of piety and religion to those that be under them.

*Use* 2. When we see any good example propounded unto us, let us strive with all possible speed to imitate it. What a deal of stir is there in the world for civil precedency and priority! Every one desires to march in the fore-front, and thinks it a shame to come lagging in the rearward. Oh that there were such an holy ambition and heavenly emulation in our hearts, that as Peter and John ran a race, which should come first to the grave of our Saviour, so men would contend who should first attain to true mortification. And when we see a good example set before us, let us imitate it, though it be in one who in outward respects is far our inferior. Shall not the master be ashamed to see that his man, whose place on earth is to come behind him, in piety towards heaven to go before him? Shall not the husband blush to see his wife, which is the weaker vessel in nature, to be the stronger vessel in grace? Shall not the elder brother dye his cheeks with the colour of virtue, to see his younger brother, who was last born, first reborn by faith, and the Holy Ghost? Yet let him not therefore envy his brother, as Cain did Abel; let him not be angry with his brother, because he is better than himself; but let him be angry with himself, because he is worse than his brother; let him turn all his malice into imitation, all his fretting at him into following of him. Say unto him as Gehazi did of Naaman, 'As the Lord liveth, I will run after him.' And though thou canst not overrun him, nor as yet overtake him, yet give not over to run with him; follow him, though not as Azahel did Abner, hard at the heels, yet as Peter did our Saviour, afar off; that though the more slowly, yet as surely thou mayest come to heaven; and though thou wert short of him whilst he lived, in the race, yet thou shalt be even with him when thou art dead, at the mark.

*Use* 3. When any bad example is presented unto us, let us decline and detest it, though the men be never so many, or so dear unto us. Imitate Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii., to whom, when the messengers sent to fetch him said, 'Behold now the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one mouth: let thy word, therefore, I pray thee, be like to one of them,' Micaiah answered, 'As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.' If they be never so dear unto us, we must not follow their bad practice. So must the son please him that begat him, that he do not displease him that created him; so must the wife follow him that married her, that she doth not offend him that made her. Wherefore as Samson, though bound with new cords, snapped them asunder as tow when it feeleth the fire; so rather than we should be led by the lewd examples of those which be near and dear unto us, let us

break in pieces all ties, engagements, relations whatsoever.

*Quest.* Yea, but one may say, What if I find in the Scripture an action recorded, whose doer is known to have been a godly and gracious man; may I not, without any further doubt or scruple, follow the same?

*Ans.* For the better satisfying hereof, I will rank the actions of godly men, registered in the Scriptures, into nine several ranks, and will shew how far forth we may safely proceed in the imitation of them.

1. We find some actions set down which are extraordinary, the doers whereof had peculiar strength and dispensation from God to do them. Thus Samson slew himself and the Philistines in the temple of Dagon; Elijah caused fire to descend on the two captains and their fifties; Elisha cursed the children of Bethel. Now these are recorded rather for our instruction than imitation; for when the sons of thunder would have been the sons of lightning, and have had fire from heaven to burn the Samaritans which refused to receive our Saviour, after the example of Elijah, Christ checked their ill-tempered zeal, and told them, 'You know not of what spirit you are of.'

2. Some examples are set down which are founded in the ceremonial law, as the eating of the paschal lamb, the circumcising of their children the eighth day. Now the date of these did expire at the death of Christ; the substance being come, the shadows are fled, and therefore they may in no wise still be observed.

3. Such examples as are founded in the judicial law, which was only calculated for the elevation of the Jewish commonwealth, as to put men to death for adultery. Now these examples tie us no farther to imitate them, than they agree with the moral law, or with those statutes by which every particular country is governed.

4. Some there be founded in no law at all, but only in an ancient custom by God tolerated and connived at, as polygamy in the patriarchs, divorces in the Jews upon every slight occasion. From these also we must in these days abstain, as which were never liked or allowed by God, though permitted in some persons and ages for some special reasons.

5. Doubtful examples, which may so be termed, because it is difficult to decide whether the actors of them therein did offend or no; so that should a jury of learned writers be empannelled to pass their verdict upon them, they would be puzzled whether to condemn or acquit them, and at length be forced to find it an *ignoramus*, as whether David did well to dissemble himself frantic, thereby to escape the cruelty of Achish king of Gath. Now our most advised way herein is altogether to abstain from the imitation of them, because there is a deal of difficulty and danger, and our judgments may easily be deceived.

6. Mixed examples, which contain in them a double action, the one good, the other bad, both so closely couched together that it is a very hard thing to sever them. Thus in the unjust steward, there was his wisdom to provide for himself, and his wickedness to purloin from his master. The first God did commend, we may imitate; the latter he could not but loathe, we may not but shun. In the Israelitish midwives, Exod i., there was *fides mentis et fallacia mentientis*, the faith of their love, and the falseness of their lying. The first God rewarded, and we may follow; the latter he could not but dislike, and we must detest. Behold here is wisdom, and let the man that hath understanding discreetly divide betwixt the dross and the gold, the chaff and the wheat, in these mixed examples, that so they may practise the one, eschew and avoid the other.

7. Those which be absolutely bad, that no charitable comment can be fastened upon them, as the drunkenness of Noah, the incest of Lot, the lying of Abraham, the swearing of Joseph, the adultery of David, the denial of Peter. Now God forbid we should imitate these; far be it from us, with king Ahaz, to take a pattern from the idolatrous altar of Damascus. The Holy Spirit hath not set these sins down with an intent they should be followed, but first to shew the frailty of his dearest saints, when he leaves them to themselves; as also to comfort us when we fall into grievous sins, when we see that as heinous offences of God's servants stand upon record in the Scripture.

8. Actions which are only good as they are qualified with such a circumstance, as David's eating of the shew-bread provided for the priests, in a case of absolute necessity. These we may follow, but then we must have a special eye and care that the same qualifying circumstance be in us, for otherwise the deed will be impious and damnable.

9. Examples absolutely good, as the faithfulness of Abraham, the peaceableness of Isaac, the painfulness of Jacob, the chastity of Joseph, the patience of Moses, the valour of Joshua, the sincerity of David, these it is lawful and laudable with our best endeavours to imitate. Follow not the adultery of David, but follow the chastity of Joseph; follow not the dissembling of Peter, but follow the sincerity of Nathanael; follow not the testiness of Jonah, but follow the meekness of Moses; follow not the apostasy of Orpah, but follow the perseverance of Ruth, which comes in the next text to be treated of.

Vers. 16, 17. *And Ruth answered, Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to depart from thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou dwellest, I will dwell: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*

Here we have the resolution of Ruth portrayed in lively colours, so that if we consider her sex, a woman; her nation, a Moabite; one may boldly pronounce of

her what our Saviour did of the centurion, 'Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.'

*Intreat me not to leave thee.* Some read it, *Be not thou against me*, as it is in the margin of the new translation, where we see that those are to be accounted our adversaries, and against us, who dissuade us from our voyage to Canaan, from going to God's true religion. They may be our fathers, they cannot be our friends; though they promise us all outward profits and pleasures, yet in very deed they are not with us, but against us, and so must be accounted of.

*Where thou lodgest, I will lodge.* A good companion, saith the Latin proverb, is *pro viatico*, I may add also, *pro diversorio*. Ruth, so be it she may enjoy Naomi's gracious company, will be content with any lodging, though haply it may be no better than Jacob had, Gen. xxviii. And yet we see how some have been discouraged even from the company of our Saviour, for fear of hard lodging; witness the scribe, to whom, when our Saviour said, 'The foxes have their holes, and the fowls of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head,' this cold comfort presently quenched his forward zeal, and he never appeared afterward, whereas he ought to have said to our Saviour as Ruth to Naomi, 'Where thou lodgest will I lodge.'

*Thy people shall be my people.* Haman being offended with Mordecai, as if it had been but lean and weak revenge to spit his spite upon one person, hated all the Jews for Mordecai's sake; the mad bear stung with one bee, would needs throw down the whole hive. But clean contrary, Naomi had so graciously demeaned herself, that Ruth, for her sake, is fallen in love with all the Jews. Farewell Melchom, farewell Chemosh, farewell Moab; welcome Israel, welcome Canaan, welcome Bethlehem; all of a sudden she will turn convert, she will turn proselyte.

*Obs.* The godly carriage of one particular person may beget a love of that country and people whereof he is, even in a stranger and foreigner. Do we then desire to gain credit to our country, praise to our people, honour to our nation, repute to our religion? let us deport and behave ourselves graciously, if we live amongst strangers. On the other side, the base and debauched manners of some one man is able to make his country stink in the nostrils of those foreigners amongst whom he lives, *ex uno discite omnes;* in one faithless Sinon one may read the treachery of all the Grecians.

*Thy God shall be my God.* Jehoshaphat, when he joined with Ahab, 1 Kings xxii., said unto him, 'My people is as thy people, and my horses are as thy horses,' that is, he would comply with him in a politic league. But Ruth goes further, to an unity in religion, 'Thy God shall be my God.' Yea, but one may say, How came Ruth to know who was the God of Naomi? I answer, as God said of Abraham, 'I know that Abraham will instruct his children;' so may one confidently say of Naomi, I know that Naomi had catechised and instructed her daughter-in-law, and often taught her that the God of the Israelites was the only true God, who made heaven and earth, and that all others were but idols, the works of men's hands. Yet as the Samaritans believed our Saviour first upon the relation of the woman that came from the well, John iv. 42, but afterwards said unto her, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world,' so haply Ruth was induced first to the liking of the God of Israel, upon the credit of Naomi's words, but afterwards her love of him proceeded from a more certain ground, the motions of God's holy Spirit in her heart.

*Where thou diest will I die.* Here Ruth supposeth two things, first, that she and her mother-in-law should both die, 'It is appointed for all once to die;' secondly, that Naomi, as eldest, should die first, for according to the ordinary custom of nature, it is most probable and likely that those that are most stricken in years should first depart this life. Yet I know not whether the rule or the exceptions be more general, and therefore let both young and old prepare for death; the first *may* die soon, but the second *cannot* live long.

*And there will I be buried.* Where she supposeth two things more, first, that those that survived her would do her the favour to bury her, which is a common courtesy, not to be denied to any. It was an epitaph written upon the grave of a beggar, *Nudus eram vivus, mortuus ecce tegor.* Secondly, she supposeth that they would bury her, according to her instructions, near to her mother Naomi.

*Obs.* As it is good to enjoy the company of the godly while they are living, so it is not amiss, if it will stand with conveniency, to be buried with them after death. The old prophet's bones escaped a burning by being buried with the other prophet's; and the man who was tumbled into the grave of Elisha, was revived by the virtue of his bones. And we read in the *Acts and Monuments*, that the body of Peter Martyr's wife was buried in a dunghill; but afterward being taken up in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was honourably buried in Oxford, in the grave of one Frideswick, a popish she-saint. To this end, that if Popery (which God forbid) should overspread our kingdom again, and if the papists should go about to untomb Peter Martyr's wife's bones, they should be puzzled to distinguish betwixt this woman's body and the relics of their saint. So good it is sometimes to be buried with those whom some do account pious, though perchance in very deed they be not so.

*The Lord do so to me, and more also.* To ascertain Naomi of the seriousness of her intentions herein, Ruth backs what formerly she had said with an oath, lined with an execration.

*Obs.* Whence we may gather, it is lawful for us to swear

upon a just cause; but then these three rules must be warily observed.

*First*, That we know that the thing whereto we swear be true, if the oath be assertory; and if it be promissory, that we be sure that it is in our intent, and in our power, God blessing us, to perform that which we promise.

*Secondly*, That the occasion whereupon we use it, be of moment and consequence, not trifling and trivial.

*Thirdly*, That we swear by God alone, and not by any creature. Swear, then, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by the temple, nor by the gold of the temple, nor by the altar, nor by the sacrifice on the altar, but by God alone; for he only is able to reward thee, if that thou affirmest be true; he only is able to punish thee, if that thou avouchest be false. Yet this doth no ways favour the practice of many now-a-days, who make oaths their language. Our Saviour said to the Jews, 'Many good works have I shewed you from the Father; for which of them go you about to stone me?' So may the Lord say to many riotous gallants now-a-days: many good deeds have I done to thee, I created thee of nothing, I sent my Son to die for thee, by my providence I continually protect and preserve thee; for which of these deeds dost thou go about by oaths to blaspheme me?

Now, whereas Ruth doth not say, *God damn me! God confound me! I would I might never stir!* but shrouds the execration under general terms, *God do so to me, and more also!* we learn it is not good to particularise in any kind of punishment when we swear, but only to express the curse in general terms, leaving it to the discretion of God almighty to choose that arrow out of his quiver which he shall think most fit to shoot at us.

*If aught but death.* See here the large extent of a saint's love, it lasts till death; and no wonder, for it is not founded upon honour, beauty, or wealth, or any other sinister respect in the party beloved, which is subject to age, or mutability, but only on the grace and piety in him, which foundation because it always lasteth, that love which is built upon it is also perpetual.

*Part thee and me.* Death is that which parteth one friend from another. Then the dear father must part with his dutiful child, then the dutiful child must forego his dear father; then the kind husband must leave his constant wife, then the constant wife must lose her kind husband; then the careful master must be sundered from his industrious servant, then the industrious servant must be severed from his careful master. Yet this may be some comfort to those whose friends death hath taken away, that as our Saviour said to the disciples, 'Yet a little while and you shall not see me, and yet a little while and you shall see me again;' so yet a little while, and we shall not see our friends; and yet a little while, and we shall see them again in the kingdom of heaven; for *non omittuntur, sed præmittuntur*, we do not forego them, but they go before us.

To conclude. We see many women so strangely disguised with phantastic fashions, as if they desired to verify the nickname of the philosopher, and to prove themselves in very deed to be very monsters; yea, many of them so affect man-like clothes and shorn hair, it is hard to discover the sex of a woman through the attire of a man. But we see in my text, worthy Ruth taking upon her, not the clothes, but the courage; not the hair, but the heart; not the attire, but the resolution of a man, yea, and more than of a man; witness her worthy speech: 'Intreat me not to depart,' &c.

Ver. 18. *And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.*

Orpah and Ruth may be compared to two strong forts, Naomi to one that besieged them, who made three sore assaults upon them. The first, in the eighth verse, which assault both of them resisted with equal constancy; the second, in the eleventh verse, to which Orpah basely yielded, and accepted terms of composition; the last, in the fifteenth verse, which Ruth most valiantly defeated, and stood upon terms of defiance to the mention of any return. Now, as soldiers when they have long besieged a city with the loss of time, money, and men, being hopeless to take it, they even sound a retreat, and retire home without accomplishing their desire; so Naomi perceiving that all her arguments which she used to conquer Ruth, like water in the smith's forge cast on coals, did more intend the heat of her constancy, gives over in my text, 'And when she saw,' &c.

Which words do probably persuade what formerly we affirmed, namely, that Naomi dissuaded her daughter, only to search and sound her sincerity, not with any true desire she should go back to Moab. For even as it is plain, that the replier in his disputation aimeth not at the suppressing, but at the advancing of a truth, who surceaseth and cavils no longer, when he sees the neck of his argument broken with a sufficient answer; so it appeareth that Naomi, what she had said formerly, spake it only to try her daughter, because having now had sufficient experiency of her constancy, she so willingly desisted. God wrestled with Jacob with desire to be conquered; so Naomi no doubt opposed Ruth, hoping and wishing that she herself might be foiled.

*And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded.* The Hebrew reads it, *that she strengthened herself*, that being their phrase to express an oath.

*Obs.* Where we observe, oaths taken upon just occasion are excellent ties and bands to strengthen men in the performance of those things to which they swear. The greater pity it is, then, that a thing in

itself so sovereign should be so daily and dangerously abused. Witness Herod, who by reason of a rash oath, cast himself into a worse prison than that wherein he had put the Baptist, making that (which being well used might have confirmed in piety) to be a means to enforce him to murder.

*Use.* Let this teach us, when we find ourselves to lag and falter in Christianity, to call to mind that solemn vow, promise, and profession which our godfathers in our name made for us at our baptism, to forsake the devil and all his works, the vain pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and to fight valiantly under Christ's standard. Let us remember from whence we are fallen, and do our first work. We need not make a new vow, but only renew the old, and so settle and establish ourselves in the practice of piety, as Ruth in my text by an oath strengthened herself.

*She left off speaking unto her.* She saw she had now enough expressed and declared her integrity, and therefore she would not put her to the trouble of any further trial.

*Obs.* Hence the doctrine is this: After proof and trial made of their fidelity, we are to trust our brethren, without any farther suspicion. Not to try before we trust, is want of wisdom; not to trust after we have tried, is want of charity. The goldsmith must purify the dross and ore from the gold, but he must be wary lest he makes waste of good metal if over-curious in too often refining. We may search and sound the sincerity of our brethren, but after good experience made of their uprightness, we must take heed lest by continual sisting and proving them we offend a weak Christian. Christ tried the woman of Syrophenicia, first with silence, then with two sharp answers; at last finding her to be sound, he dismissed her with granting her request, and commending of her faith. When he had said to Peter the third time, 'Lovest thou me?' he rested satisfied with Peter's answer, and troubled him with no more questions.

*Use.* It may confute the jealous and suspicious minds of such who still think that their brethren are rotten at the heart, hypocritical, dissemblers, though they have made never so manifest proof of their uprightness. Thomas would not take his Master's resurrection on the credit of his fellow-apostles' relation; his faith would not follow, except his own sense was the usher to lead it the way; so these men are altogether incredulous and very infidels in the point of their brethren's sincerity, though it be never so surely warranted unto them on the words of those whom they ought to believe. Hence oftentimes it comes to pass that they scandalise and offend many weak Christians, whose graces are true, though weak; faith unfeigned, though feeble; yea, it maketh weak saints to be jealous of themselves, to see others so jealous of them. But we must be wonderful careful how we give offence to any of God's little ones. When Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 13, would have persuaded Jacob to drive on faster, Jacob excused himself, saying, that 'the children were tender, and the ewes big with young, and if they should be overdriven one day they would die.' Thus if any would persuade us to sist and winnow, and try the integrity of our brethren, after long experience of them, we may answer, This is dangerous to be done, because smoking flax and bruised reeds, tender professors, may utterly be discouraged and disheartened by our restless pressing and disquieting of them. Wherefore Naomi having now seen the reality of Ruth's resolutions, left off from any further molesting of her.

Vers. 19–22. *So they went both until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, all the city was moved at them; and they said, Is not this Naomi?'* &c.

The Holy Spirit mentioneth not what discourse they exchanged by the way; yet no doubt they were neither silent, nor busied in unprofitable talk.

*And all the city was moved,* &c. See here, Naomi was formerly a woman of good quality and fashion, of good rank and repute, otherwise her return in poverty had not been so generally taken notice of. Shrubs may be grubbed to the ground, and none miss them, but every one marks the felling of a cedar. Grovelling cottages may be evened to the earth, and none observe them; but every traveller takes notice of the fall of a steeple. Let this comfort those to whom God hath given small possessions. Should he visit them with poverty, and take from them that little they have, yet their grief and shame would be the less; they should not have so many fingers pointed at them, so many eyes staring on them, so many words spoken of them; they might lurk in obscurity. It must be a Naomi, a person of eminency and estate, whose poverty must move a whole city.

*And they said, Is not this Naomi?* Remarkable it is, that so many people should jump in the same expression; but as Abraham laughed and Sarah laughed, both used the same outward gesture, yet arising from different causes; his laughter from joy, hers from distrust; so all these people might meet in the same form of words, yet far different in their minds wherewith they spake them. Some might speak out of admiration; Strange, wonderful, is this she who once was so wealthy? how quickly is a river of riches drained dry; she that formerly was so fair, now one can scarce read the ruins of beauty in her face! Is not this Naomi? Some out of exprobation; See, see, this is she that could not be content to tarry at home to take part of the famine with the rest of her fellows, but must needs with her husband and sons, must be gadding to Moab, see what good she hath got by removing; by changing her country, she hath changed her condition! Is not this Naomi? Some might speak it out of commiseration; Alas, alas, is not this that gracious woman, that godly saint, which formerly by her charity relieved

many in distress? how soon is a full clod turned into parched earth? one that supplied others, into one that needeth to be supplied by others. Is not this Naomi?

*And she said, call me not Naomi, but call me Marah.* *Naomi* signifieth *beautiful*, *Marah*, *bitter*, Exod. xv. 23, where we see that the godly in poverty are unwilling to have names and titles disagreeing and disproportioned to their present estates; which may confute the folly of many, which being in distress, and living little better than upon the alms of others, will still stand upon their points, bear themselves bravely on their birth, not lose an inch of their place, not abate an ace of their gentry; far otherwise was Naomi affected, being poor, she would not be over-named or title-heavy. 'Call me not *Naomi*, but call me *Marah*.'

*Obs.* Here also we may see that it was a custom of great antiquity in the world, that men and women should have several names whereby they were called, and that for these three reasons.

1. That they might be differenced and distinguished from others.

2. That they might be stirred up to verify the meanings and significations of their names; wherefore let every *Obadiah* strive to be a *servant* of God, each *Nathanael* to be a *gift* of God, *Onesimus* to be *profitable*, every *Roger* quiet and *peaceable*, *Robert* famous for *counsel*, and *William* a *help* and defence to many; not like *Absalom*, who was not a *father of peace*, as his name doth import, but a son of sedition, and *Diotrephes*, not *nursed by God*, as his name sounds, but puffed up by the devil, as it is 3 John 9.

3. That they might be incited to imitate the virtues of those worthy persons who formerly have been bearers and owners of their names. Let all *Abrahams* be faithful; *Isaacs*, quiet; *Jacobs*, painful; *Josephs* chaste; every *Lewis*, pious; *Edward*, confessor of the true faith; *William*, conqueror over his own corruptions. Let them also carefully avoid those sins for which the bearers of the names stand branded to posterity. Let every *Jonah* beware of frowardness; *Thomas*, of distrustfulness; *Martha*, of worldliness; *Mary*, of wantonness. If there be two of our names one exceedingly good, the other notoriously evil, let us decline the vices of the one, and practise the virtues of the other. Let every *Judas* not follow Judas Iscariot, who betrayed our Saviour, but Judas the brother of James, the writer of the general epistle; each *Demetrius*, not follow him in the Acts, who made silver shrines for Diana, but Demetrius, 3 John, who had a good report of all men. Every *Ignatius* not imitate Ignatius Loyola, the lame father of blind obedience, but Ignatius the worthy martyr in the primitive church. And if it should chance through the indiscretion of parents and god-fathers, that a bad name should be imposed on any, oh let not folly be with them because *Nabal* is their name; but in such a case, let them strive to falsify, disprove, and confute their names; otherwise if they be good, they must answer them.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth, there was a royal ship called the *Revenge*, which having maintained a long fight against a fleet of Spaniards (wherein eight hundred shot were discharged against her), was at last fain to yield; but no sooner were her men gone out of her and two hundred fresh Spaniards come into her, but she suddenly sunk them and herself, and so the *Revenge* was revenged. Shall lifeless pieces of wood answer the names which men impose upon them, and shall not reasonable souls do the same? But of all names, I pray God that never just occasion be given that we be christened *Ichabod*, but that the glory may remain in our Israel so long as the faithful witness endureth in heaven. And so much of those words, 'Call me not Naomi, but,' &c.

*For the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me.* Afflictions relish sour and bitter even to the palates of the best saints.

*Obs.* Now bitter things are observed in physic to have a double operation; first, to strengthen and corroborate the liver, and secondly, to cleanse and wipe away choler which cloggeth the stomach; both these effects afflictions by their bitterness produce; they strengthen the inward vitals of a Christian, his faith and patience, and cleanse God's saints from those superfluous excrements which the surfeit of prosperity hath caused in them. It may therefore serve to comfort such as groan under God's afflicting hand, Heb. xii. 11. The book which St John ate, Rev. x. 10, was sweet in his mouth but bitter in his belly; clean contrary afflictions are bitter in the mouth, but sweet in the belly; God by sanctifying them, extracting honey out of gall, and sugar out of wormwood. And let it teach us also, not to wonder if the children of God wince, and shrug, and make sour faces, when afflicted. Wonder not at David, if he 'crieth out in the anguish of his heart;' at Job, if he 'complaineth in the bitterness of his soul;' at Jeremiah, if he 'lamenteth in the extremity of his grief.' For even then they are swallowing of a portion which is bitter unto flesh and blood.

*I went out full, and the Lord hath caused me to return empty.* Here may we see the uncertainty of all outward wealth.

*Obs.* How quickly may a Crassus or Crœsus be turned into a Codrus, the richest into the poorest of men. Whom the sunrising seeth in wealth, him the sunsetting may see in want. Set not up then your horns so high, neither speak presumptuous words, ye wealthy men; for God, if it pleaseth him, can in a moment dispossess you of all your riches. And let us all 'not lay up treasures here on earth, where rust and moths do corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; but lay up your treasure in heaven, where rust and moth do not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal.'

*Why call you me Naomi, since the Lord*, &c. The mention of their former wealth is grievous to the godly, when they are in present poverty.

*Obs.* When the children of Israel are captives in Babylon, it cuts them to the heart to be twitted with the songs of Zion. And it may teach this point of wisdom to such as repair to give comfort to men in affliction, not to mention that tedious and ungrateful subject, what happiness that party formerly enjoyed. Sum not up to Job in distress, the number of his camels, tell not his sheep, reckon not his oxen, read not unto him an inventory of those goods whereof he before was possessed, for this will but add to his vexation; rather descend to apply solid and substantial comfort unto him.

*Sithence the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me.* Every affliction is a witness that God is angry with us for our sins.

*Obs.* Who then is able to hold out suit with God in the court of heaven? For God himself is both judge and witness, and also the executor and inflicter of punishments. It is therefore impossible for sinful man to plead with him; and it is our most advised course, as soon as may be, to come to terms of composition with him, and to make means unto him through the mediation of our Saviour. Now that all afflictions are immediately inflicted by God, we have shewed formerly.

*And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.* The Jews had two distinct harvests of wheat and barley, and barley was the first, 2 Sam. xxi. 9. So here we see the providence of God, in ordering and disposing the journey of Naomi, to end it in the most convenient time. Had she come before harvest, she would have been straitened for means to maintain herself; if after harvest, Ruth had lost all those occasions which paved the way to her future advancement. God therefore, who ordered her going, concludes her journey in the beginning of harvest.

And thus have we gone over this chapter. Now as Samuel in the first book, chap. vii. ver. 12, erected an altar and called it *Ebenezer*, for, said he, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped us,' so here may I raise an altar of gratitude unto God, with the same inscription, *Ebenezer*, 'Hitherto the Lord of his goodness hath assisted us.'

## CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1, 2. *And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, I pray thee let me go into the field, and gather ears of corn after him, in whose sight I find favour. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.*

This first verse presents us with two remarkable things.

1. Poor Naomi was allied to powerful Boaz.
2. Boaz was both a powerful man and a godly man.

Of the first, poor people may be allied and of great kindred to those that are wealthy; and those that be wealthy, to such as are poor. Joseph, though governor of Egypt, had poor Jacob to his father, and plain shepherds to his brethren. Esther, though queen to Ahasuerus, hath poor Mordecai for her uncle.

*Use* 1. Let this confute such as having gotten a little more thick clay than the rest of their family, the getting of new wealth and honour makes them to lose their old eyes, so that they cannot see and discern their poor kindred afterwards. When Joseph was governor of Egypt, it is said that he knew his brethren, but his brethren knew not him; but now-a-days it happeneth clean contrary. If one of a family be advanced to great honour, it is likely that his kindred will know him, but he oftentimes comes to forget them. Few there be of the noble nature of the Lord Cromwell, who sitting at dinner with the lords of the council, and chancing to see a poor man afar off which used to sweep the cells and the cloisters, called for the man, and told the lords, This man's father hath given me many a good meal, and he shall not lack so long as I live (Fox, p. 1188).

*Use* 2. Let it teach those who are at the top of their kindred, the best of their house, to be thankful to God's gracious goodness, who hath raised them to such a height. He hath not dealt thus with every one, neither are all of their kindred so well provided for outward maintenance. And also let them learn to be bountiful and beneficial to their kindred in distress. Mordecai said to Esther: Esther iv. 14, 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time?' namely, to deliver her countrymen the Jews from that imminent danger.

So who knoweth whether God hath raised thee up, who art the best of thy kindred, to this very intent, that thou mightest be the treasure and the storehouse to supply the want of others which are allied unto thee? But if one should chance to be of so wealthy a stock as that none of his alliance stood in need of his charity, let such a one cast his eye upon such as are of kindred unto him by his second birth, and so he shall find enough widows, orphans, and poor Christians to receive his liberality.

Notwithstanding, let poor people be wary and discreet, that through their idleness they be not a burden to wealthy men of their alliance. When a husbandman claimed kindred in Grosted, bishop of Lincoln, and would fain on the instant turn a gentleman, and to this end requested his lordship to bestow an office upon him; the bishop told him that if his plough were broken he would mend it, if he wanted a plough

he would make him a new one, telling him withal that he should by no means leave that calling and vocation wherein God had set him. So ought all poor people industriously to take pains for themselves, and not to give themselves over to ease, relying and depending for their maintenance on their reference and relation to a rich kinsman.

Come we now to the second observation, that the same man may be godly, and also mighty in wealth, like Boaz. Behold your calling; not many wise, yet some wise, as Solomon and Sergius, deputy of Cyprus; not many rich, yet some rich, as Abraham, Job; not many noble, yet some noble, as Theophilus. For it is not the having of wealth, but the having confidence in wealth; not the possessing it, but the relying on it, which makes rich men incapable of the kingdom of heaven; otherwise wealth well used is a great blessing, enabling the owner to do God more glory, the church and commonwealth more good.

*Use.* Let all wealthy men strive to add inward grace unto their outward greatness. Oh, it is excellent when Joash and Jehoiada meet together, when prince and priest, power and piety, are united in the same person, that so greatness may be seasoned and sanctified by grace, and grace credited and countenanced by greatness, that so kings may be nursing-fathers, and queens nursing-mothers to God's church. Contrary to which, how many be there that think themselves privileged from being good, because they are great? Confining piety to hospitals; for their own parts they disdain so base a companion. Hence as hills, the higher the barrenner; so men commonly the wealthier the worse, the more honour the less holiness. And as rivers, when content with a small channel, run sweet and clear; when swelling to a navigable channel, by the confluence of several tributary rivulets, gather mud and mire, and grow salt and brackish, and violently bear down all before them; so many men, who in mean estates have been pious and religious, being advanced in honour and enlarged in wealth, have grown both impious and profane towards God, cruel and tyrannical over their brethren.

*And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, I pray thee let me go into the field and gather ears of corn,* &c. Herein two excellent graces appear in Ruth.

*First,* Obedience; she would not go to glean without the leave of her mother-in-law. Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so much duty, no, not in natural daughters to their own mothers. How many of them now-a-days, in matters of more moment, will betroth and contract themselves, not only without the knowledge and consent, but even against the express commands of their parents?

*Secondly,* See her industry, that she would condescend to glean. Though I think not with the Jewish Rabbins, that Ruth was the daughter to Eglon, king of Moab, yet no doubt she was descended of good parentage, and, now see, fain to glean. Whence we may gather, that those that formerly have had good birth and breeding may afterward be forced to make hard shifts to maintain themselves. Musculus was forced to work with a weaver, and afterwards was fain to delve in the ditch about the city of Strasburg; as Pantaleon in his life. Let this teach even those whose veins are washed with generous blood, and arteries quickened with noble spirits, in their prosperity to furnish, qualify, and accommodate themselves with such gentle arts and liberal mysteries as will be neither blemish nor burden to their birth, that so, if hereafter God shall cast them into poverty, these arts may stand them in some stead towards their maintenance and relief.

*And Naomi said, Go, my daughter.* See here how meekly and mildly she answers her. The discourse of God's children, in their ordinary talk, ought to be kind and courteous: so betwixt Abraham and Isaac, Gen. xxii. 7; betwixt Elkanah and Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 33. Indeed it is lawful and necessary for Jacob to chide Rachel speaking unadvisedly, Gen. xxx. 2, for Job to say to his wife, 'Thou speakest like a foolish wife.' But otherwise, when no just occasion of anger is given, their words ought to be meek and kind, like Naomi's, 'Go, my daughter.'

Vers. 3, 4. *And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and it happened that she met with the portion of the field of Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. And, behold, Baaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.*

Formerly we have seen the dutifulness of Ruth, which would not leave her mother until she had leave from her mother. Proceed we now to her industry, and God's providence over her. As the star, Mat. ii., guided the wise men to Judea, to Bethlehem, to the inn, to the stable, to the manger, so the rays and beams of God's providence conducted Ruth, that of all grounds within the compass and confines, within the bounds and borders of Bethlehem, she lighted on the field of Boaz. 'And it happened.'

*Obj.* How comes the Holy Spirit to use this word, a profane term, which deserves to be banished out of the mouths of all Christians? Are not all things ordered by God's immediate providence, without which 'a sparrow lighteth not on the ground'? Is not that sentence most true, 'God stretcheth from end to end strongly, and disposeth all things sweetly!' *Strongly,* Lord, for thee; *sweetly,* Lord, for me; so St Bernard. Or was the providence of God solely confined to his people of Israel, that so Ruth, being a stranger of Moab, must be left to the adventure of hazard? How comes the holy Spirit to use this word, *hap?*

*Ans.* Things are said to *happen,* not in respect of God, but in respect of us; because oftentimes they come to pass, not only without our purpose and fore-

cast, but even against our intentions and determinations. It is lawful, therefore, in a sober sense to use these expressions, 'it chanced,' or, 'it fortuned,' Luke x. 30. Nor can any just exception be taken against those words in the collect, 'Through all changes and chances of this mortal life,' provided always that in our forms of speech we dream not of any heathen chance. It is observed that τυχὴ is not used in all the works of Homer; but sure St Austin, in the first of his Retractations, complaineth that he had too often used the word *fortuna*, and therefore, in the Pagans' sense thereof, we ought to abstain from it.

*Obs.* Now whereas Ruth by chance lighteth on Boaz his field, we may observe, admirable is the providence of God in the ordering of contingent events to his glory and his children's good. The Scripture swarmeth with precedents in this behalf, which at this time I surcease to recite, and conclude with the psalmist, 'O Lord, how wonderful are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches;' to which I may add, 'Oh that men would therefore praise the name of the Lord, and shew forth the wonderful works that he doth for the children of men!'

*And, behold, Boaz came unto his reapers.* He had a man over them, yet himself came to oversee them.

*Obs.* Where note, it is the part of a thriving husband not to trust the care of his affairs to his servants, but to oversee them himself. The master's eye maketh a fat horse; and one asking, What was the best compost to manure land, it was answered, The dust of the master's feet, meaning his presence to behold his own business. Hushai would not counsel Absalom to let Ahithophel go with his army, but advised him, 'Thou shalt go to battle in thine own person.' However, he herein had a secret intent, yet thus far the proportion holds: things thrive best not when they are committed to surrogates, deputies, delegates, and substitutes, but when men themselves oversee them. Let masters therefore of families carefully attend on their own business; and let the daughters of Sarah, whom the meekness of their sex hath privileged from following without-doors affairs, imitate the wise woman: Prov. xxxi. 15, 27, 'She rises whiles as yet it is night, and giveth her meat to her household, and their portions to her maids. She looks well to all the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.' And such servants which have careless masters, let them look better to their masters' estate than their masters do to their own; let them be neither idle nor unfaithful in their place, knowing that though their earthly master be negligent to eye them, yet they have a Master in heaven who both beholds and will punish, or reward them according to their deserts. And as for the sons of the prophets, let them feed the flock over which they are placed, and not think to shuffle and shift off their care to their curates and readers in their own unnecessary absence; and yet how many are there that preach as seldom as Apollo laughs, once in the year. Indeed, Elijah fasted forty days and forty nights in the strength of one meal, but surely these think that their people can hold out fasting a twelvemonth. Well, let them practice Boaz's example, as they have curates, so had he one to care for his affairs; and yet, behold, in person he comes forth unto his reapers.

*And said to them, The Lord be with you.* Observe, courteous and loving salutations beseem Christians; indeed, our Saviour, Mat. x., forbade his disciples to salute any in the way, but his meaning was, that they should not lag or delay, whereby to be hindered from the service wherein they were employed; and St John, in his second epistle, saith, That to some we must not say God speed, lest we may be made partakers of their evil deeds; but that is meant of notorious sinners, which have discovered their impious intents. It is commonly said that the small-pox is not infectious until it be broken out, so that before the time one may safely converse, eat, drink, lie with them; but after the pox is broken out it is very dangerous. So we may safely salute and exchange discourse with the most wicked sinners, whiles yet they smother and conceal their bad designs; but when once they declare and express them, then it is dangerous to have any further familiarity with them; for such Marcions, *the first-born of the devil*, and *the eldest son of Satan*, are salutations good enough.

*Use.* Those are justly to be reproved which lately have changed all hearty expressions of love into verbal compliments, which etymology is not to be deduced a *completione mentis*, but a *completè mentiri*. And yet I cannot say that men lie in their throat, for I persuade myself their words never came so near their heart, but merely they lie in their mouths, where all their promises

> Both birth and burial in a breath they have;
> That mouth which is their womb, it is their grave.

Yea, those words which St Paul to the Corinthians thought to be the most affectionate expression of love, is now made the word of course, commonly bandied betwixt superficial friends at the first encounter, *your servant;* worse than these are the ambitious saluters, like Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 4, who at the same time, by taking his father's subjects by their hands, stole away their hearts, and the lower his body did crouch, the higher his mind did aspire. Worst of all is the treacherous salutation of Judas and Joab, who at one instant pretend lip-love and intend heart-hatred, who both kiss and kill, embrace another with their hands, and imbrue their hands in his blood whom they embrace.

*And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.* When one offers us a courtesy, especially being our superior, it is fitting we should requite him. It is a noble conquest for to be overcome with wrongs, but it is a sign

of a degenerous nature to be out-vied with courtesies; and therefore, if one begin a kindness to us, let us (if it lie in our power) pledge him in the same nature.

Vers. 5, 6, 7. *And Boaz said unto the servant which was appointed over the reapers, Whose is this maid? And the servant which was appointed over the reapers answered and said, This is the Moabitish maid, which came with Naomi from the country of Moab, which came and said, Let me gather, I pray, among the sheaves after the reapers; and so she came and stayed here from morning until now: only she tarried a little in the house.*

*And Boaz said unto the servant which was appointed over the reapers.* Here we learn that it is a part of good husbandry in a numerous family to have one servant as steward to oversee the rest. Thus Abraham had his Eliezer of Damascus, Potiphar his Joseph, Joseph his man which put the cup into Benjamin's sack, Ahab his Obadiah, Hezekiah his Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah.

*Obs.* Let masters, therefore, in choosing their stewards to be set above the rest, take such as are qualified, like Jethro's description of inferior judges, Exod. xviii., 'men of courage, fearing God, dealing truly, hating covetousness.' And however they privilege them to be above the rest of their servants, yet let them make them to know their duty and their distance to their masters, lest that come to pass which Solomon foretelleth, Prov. xxix., 'He that bringeth up his servant delicately in his youth will make him like his son at the last.' Let stewards not be like that unjust one in the Gospel, who made his master's debtors write down fifty measures of wheat and fourscore measures of oil, when both severally should have been an hundred, but let them carefully discharge their conscience in that office wherein they are placed, whilst inferior servants that are under their command must neither grieve nor grudge to obey them nor envy at their honour. But let this comfort those underlings, that if they be wronged by these stewards, their appeal lies open from them to their master, who, if good, will no doubt redress their grievances.

Now, if stewards be necessary in ordering of families, surely men in authority are more necessary in governing the church and managing the commonwealth. If a little cock-boat cannot be brought up a tributary rivulet without one to guide it, how shall a caravan, a galleon, or argosy, sailing in the vast ocean, be brought into a harbour without a pilot to conduct it? Let us, therefore, with all willingness and humility, submit ourselves to our superiors, that so under them we may live a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

*Who is this maid?* Boaz would know what those persons were that gleaned upon his land. And good reason; for we ought not to prostitute our liberality to all, though unknown, but first we must examine who and whence they be; otherwise, that which is given to worthless persons is not given but thrown away. I speak not this to blunt the charity of any who have often bestowed their benevolence upon beggars unknown and unseen before, but if easily and with conveniency (as Boaz could) they may attain to know the qualities and conditions of such persons before they dispose their liberality unto them.

*And the servant which was appointed.* He herein performed the part of a careful servant, namely, fully to inform his master. Servants ought so to instruct themselves as thereby to be able to give an account to their lords when they shall be called thereunto, and give them plenary satisfaction and contentment in anything belonging to their office wherein they shall be questioned. Now, whereas he doth not derogate or detract from Ruth, though a stranger, but sets her forth with her due commendation, we gather, servants when asked ought to give the pure character of poor people to their masters, and no way to wrong or traduce them.

*Which came and said, Let me gather, I pray.* See here Ruth's honesty: she would not presume to glean before she had leave. Clean contrary is the practice of poor people now-a-days, which oftimes take away things, not only without the knowledge, but even against the will, of the owners. The boy of the priest, 1 Sam. ii. 16, when the sacrifice was in offering, used to come with a flesh-hook of three teeth, and used to cast it into the fat of the sacrifice, making that his fee, which so he fetched out. If any gainsayed him, he answered, 'Thou shalt give it me now, or, if thou wilt not, I will take it by force.' Thus poor people now-a-days, they cast their hook, their violent hands (gleaning the lean will not content them), into the fat, the best and principal of rich men's estates, and, breaking all laws of God and the king, they by main force draw it unto themselves. Not so Ruth; she would not glean without leave.

*And stayed here from morning until now.* See here her constancy in industry. Many are very diligent at the first setting forth for a fit and a gird, for a snatch and away; but nothing violent is long permanent: they are soon tired, quickly weary, and then turn from labour to laziness. But Ruth continued in her labour 'from the morning till now,' till night, till the end of the harvest. O that we would imitate the constancy of Ruth in the 'working out of our salvation with fear and trembling'! not only to be industrious in the morning, when we first enter into Christianity, but to hold out and to persevere even to the end of our lives.

*Only she tarried a little in the house.* No doubt some indispensable business detained her there; and probable it is that a principal one was to say her matins, to do her devotions, commend herself with fervent prayer unto the Lord to bless her and her en-

deavours the day following. A whet is no let, saith the proverb; mowers lose not any time which they spend in whetting or grinding of their scythes. Our prayer to God in the morning, before we enter on any business, doth not hinder us in our day's work, but rather whets it, sharpens it, sets an edge on our dull souls, and makes our minds to undertake our labours with the greater alacrity.

And here may I take just occasion to speak concerning gleaning. Consider first the antiquity thereof, as being commanded by God, Lev. xix. 9 and xxiii. 22. Secondly, consider the equity thereof; it doth the rich no whit of harm; it doth the poor a great deal of good. One may say of it as Lot of Zoar, 'Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?' Is it not a petty, a small exile courtesy, and the hearts of the poor shall be comforted thereby? *Reliquiæ Danaùm, atque immitis Achillis*, the remnant which hath escaped the edge of the scythes, and avoided the hands of the reapers. Had our reapers the eyes of eagles and the claws of harpies, they could not see and snatch each scattered ear, which may well be allowed for the relief of the poor. When our Saviour said to the woman of Syrophenicia, 'It is not good to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs,' she answered, 'Yea, Lord, but the dogs eat of the children's crumbs that fall from their table.' So, if any misers mutter, It is not meet that my bread should be cast unto poor people, to glean corn upon my lands, yea, but let them know that poor people (which are no dogs, but, setting a little thick clay aside, as good as themselves,) may eat the falling crumbs, the scattered ears which they gather on the ground.

*Use.* It may confute the covetousness of many which repine that the poor should have any benefit by them, and are so far from suffering the poor to glean, that even they themselves glean from the poor, and speak much like to churlish Nabal: 1 Sam. xxv. 11, 'Shall I take my wheat, my rye, and my barley, which I have prepared for my family, and give it to the poor, which I know not whence they be?' Yea, some have so hard hearts that they would leave their grain to be destroyed by beasts and vermin, rather than that the poor should receive any benefit thereby. Cruel people, which prefer their hogs before Christ's sheep, mice before men, crows before Christians!

But withal, poor people must learn this lesson, to know the meaning of these two pronouns, *mine* and *thine*, what belongs to their rich masters and what pertains to themselves. The sheep which had little spots, those were Jacob's fee; so the little spots, the loose, straggling, and scattered ears, those are the poor's; but as for the great ones, the handfuls, the armfuls, the sheaves, the shocks, the cocks, these are none of theirs, but the rich owners'; and therefore let the poor take heed how they put forth their hands to their neighbours' goods.

*Motive.* One forcible motive to persuade the rich to suffer the poor to glean, may be this: Even the greatest in respect of God is but a gleaner. God, he is the master of the harvest; all gifts and graces they are his in an infinite measure, and every godly man more or less gleans from him. Abraham gleaned a great glean of faith, Moses of meekness, Joshua of valour, Samson of strength, Solomon of wealth and wisdom, St Paul of knowledge, and the like. Now, if we would be glad at our hearts that the Lord would give us free leave and liberty for to glean graces out of his harvest, let us not grudge and repine that poor people glean a little gain from our plenty. To conclude, when God hath multiplied our *five loaves*, that is, when of our little seed he hath given us a great deal of increase, let poor people, like Ruth in the text, be the *twelve baskets* which may take up the fragments of gleanings which are left.

Vers. 8, 9, 10. *Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou, my daughter? Go to no other field to gather, neither go from hence, but abide here by my maidens*, &c.

Mothers and nurses are very careful tenderly to handle infants when they are but newly born. So Ruth; Christ was newly formed in her, a young convert, a fresh proselyte; and therefore Boaz useth her with all kindness, both in works and words, 'Hearest thou, my daughter.'

*Obs.* Aged persons may term younger people their sons and daughters, 1 Sam. iii. 6; and if they were persons in authority, though they were well-nigh equal in age, they used the same expression. Thus Joseph to his brother Benjamin: Gen. xliii. 29, 'God be merciful to thee, my son.' Let young people therefore reverently observe their duty and distance to their seniors in age and superiors in authority. Yet I am afraid men keep not the method of Jacob's children, the eldest sitting down according to his age, and the youngest according to his youth, but fulfil the complaint of the prophet, 'The young presume against the aged, and the base against the honourable.' Let aged persons strive to deserve their respect, by demeaning themselves gravely, and striving to add gracious hearts to grey hairs; otherwise, if they discover any lightness, looseness, wantonness in their carriage, young men will hereupon take occasion not only to slight and neglect, but also to contemn and despise, their paternal distance and father-like authority. Now, as for young ministers, they have not this advantage to speak unto young people in the phrase of Boaz, 'Hearest thou, my daughter?' but must practise St Paul's precept: 1 Tim. v. 1, 'Rebuke not an elder, but exhort him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, in all pureness.'

*But here abide by my maidens.*

*Obs.* Hence we gather it is most decent for women to associate and accompany themselves with those of

their own sex: Miriam, Exod. xv. 20, with a feminine choir, with timbrels and dances, answered the men; and the disciples wondered, John iv. 27, that Christ talked with a woman, shewing hereby that it was not his ordinary course to converse alone with one of another sex; for herein the apostle's precept deserves to take place, namely, to 'avoid from all appearance of evil.'

*Have I not commanded the servants that they should not touch thee?* Boaz had just cause to fear lest some of his servants might wrong her, to prevent which he gave them strict charge to the contrary.

*Obs.* Here we see that servile natures are most prone and proclive to wrong poor strangers. Indeed, generous spirits disdain to make those the subjects of their cruelty, which rather should be the objects of their pity; but it complies with a servile disposition to tyrannize and domineer over such poor people as cannot resist them. Like petty brooks pent within a narrow channel, on every dash of rain they are ready to overflow, and wax angry at the apprehension of the smallest distaste. The locusts, Rev. ix. 10, had 'tails like scorpions, and stings in their tails,' which by some is expounded that of those people which are meant by the scorpions, the poorest were the proudest; the meanest, the most mischievous; the basest, the bloodiest. And surely he that readeth the story of our English martyrs, shall find that one Alexander a jailor, and one drunken Warwick an executioner, were most basely and barbarously cruel to God's poor saints.

Secondly, From these words observe, that it is the part of a good master not only to do no harm himself, but also to take order that his servants do none, Gen. xii. 20 and xxvi. 11. When Elisha would take nothing of Naaman, 2 Kings v. 20, Gehazi said, 'As the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take something of him.' Thus may base servants (if not prevented with a command to the contrary) wrong their most right and upright masters, by taking gifts and bribes privately. The water (though it ariseth out of a most pure fountain) which runneth through minerals of lead, copper, brimstone, or the like, hath with it a strange taste and relish in the mouth; so justice, which should run down like a stream, though it ariseth out of a pure fountain, out of the breast of a sincere and incorrupted judge, yet if formerly it hath passed through the mines of gold and silver, I mean through bad servants, who have taken bribes to prepossess the judge their master with the prejudice of false informations, justice hereby may be strangely perverted and corrupted. Many masters themselves have been honest and upright, yet much wrong hath been done under them by their wicked servants. It is said of queen Mary, that for her own part she did not so much as bark, but she had them under her which did more than bite; such were Gardner, Bonner, Story, Woodroofe, Tyrrell. Now, she should have tied up these ban-dogs, and chained and fettered up these bloodhounds from doing any mischief. Camden in his *Elizabetha*, in the year 1595, writeth thus of the then Lord Chancellor of England, *Ob sordes et corruptelas famulorum in beneficiis ecclesiasticis nundinandis, ipse vir integer, ab ecclesiasticis haud bene audivit.* He ought to have imitated the example of Boaz, not only to have done no harm himself, but also to have enjoined the same to his servants: 'Have I not commanded my servants that they should not touch thee?'

Thirdly, In these words Boaz doth intimate that if he gave a charge to the contrary, none of his servants durst presume once to molest her.

*Obs.* Where we see masters' commands ought to sound laws in the ears of their servants, if they be lawful. Indeed, if Absalom (2 Sam. xiii. 28) saith to his servants, 'Kill Amnon; fear not, for have I not commanded you?' this command did not oblige, because the thing enjoined was altogether ungodly. Otherwise men must imitate the obedience of the centurion's servants, who said to the one, 'Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to his servant, Do this, and he doeth it.'

*Corol.* Now, if we ought to be thus dutiful to our earthly masters, surely, if the Lord of heaven enjoineth us anything, we ought to do it without any doubt or delay. Were there no hell to punish, no heaven to reward, no promises pronounced to the godly, no threatenings denounced to the wicked, yet this is a sufficient reason to make us do a thing, because God hath enjoined it; this a convincing argument to make us refrain from it, because he hath forbidden it.

*Then she fell on her face, and bowed.*

*Quest.* Was not this too much honour to give to any mortal creature? and doth it not come within the compass of the breach of the second commandment, 'Thou shalt not bow down and worship them,' especially seeing godly Mordecai refused to bend his knee to Haman?

*Ans.* Civil honour may and must be given to all in authority, according to the usual gestures of the country. Now, such bowing was the custom of the eastern people, Gen. xxxiii. 3. As for Mordecai's instance, it makes not against this; he being therein either immediately warranted by God, or else he refused to bow to Haman as being an Amalekite, betwixt which cursed brood and the Israelites the Lord commanded an eternal enmity.

*Corol.* Now, if Ruth demeaned herself with such reverent gesture to Boaz, how reverent ought our gesture to be when we approach into the presence of God. Indeed, 'God is a Spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit and truth;' yet so that he will have the outward decent posture of the body to accompany the inward sincerity of the soul.

*And said, Why have I found favour?* As if she had said, When I reflect my eyes upon myself, I cannot read in myself the smallest worth to deserve so great a favour from thy hands; and therefore I must acknowledge myself exceedingly beholden to you. But prin-

cipally I lift up my eyes to the providence of the Lord of heaven. 'Men's hearts are in his hand as the rivers of water; he turneth them whither he pleaseth;' he it is that hath mollified thy heart, to shew this undeserved kindness unto me. Here we see Ruth's humility. Many now-a-days would have made a contrary construction of Boaz his charity, and reasoned thus: Surely he seeth in me some extraordinary worth, whereof as yet I have not taken notice in myself; and therefore hereafter I will maintain a better opinion of my own deserts. But Ruth confesseth her own unworthiness; and from her example let us learn to be humbly and heartily thankful to those which bestow any courtesy or kindness upon us.

*Since I am a stranger.* She amplifies his favour from the indignity of her own person, being a stranger.

*Corol.* Oh, then, if Ruth interpreted it such a kindness that Boaz took notice of her, being a stranger, how great is the love of God to us, who loved us in Christ when we were strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel! As the never-failing foundation of the earth is firmly fastened for ever fleeting, yet settled on no other substance than its own ballasted weight, so God's love was founded on neither cause nor condition in the creature, but issued only out of his own free favour. So that in this respect we may all say unto God what Ruth doth unto Boaz in the text, 'Why have we found favour in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of us, seeing we are but strangers?'

Vers. 11, 12. *And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband, &c.*

*It hath been fully shewed me all.* More than probable it is that Boaz had received his intelligence immediately from Naomi.

*Obs.* However, here we may see the virtues of worthy persons will never want trumpets to sound them to the world. The Jews were the centurion's trumpet to our Saviour, Luke vii. 5; and the widows Dorcas her trumpet to St Peter, Acts ix. 39. Let this encourage men in their virtuous proceedings, knowing that their worthy deeds shall not be buried in obscurity, but shall find tongues in their lively colours to express them. Absalom having no children, and desirous to perpetuate his name, erected a pillar in the king's dale; and the same is called Absalom's pillar unto this day. But the most compendious way for men to consecrate their memories to eternity, is to erect a pillar of virtuous deeds, which shall ever remain, even when the most lasting monuments in the world shall be consumed, as not able to satisfy the *boulimie** of all-consuming time. And to put the worst, grant the envious men with a cloud of calumnies should eclipse the beams of virtuous memories from shining in the world, yet this may be their comfort, that God that sees in secret will reward them openly. Moreover, it is the duty of such who have received courtesies from others, to profess and express the same as occasion shall serve, that so their benefactors may publicly receive their deserved commendation. Thus surely Naomi had done by Ruth, from whose mouth no doubt, though not immediately, her virtues were sounded in the ears of Boaz: 'It hath been fully shewed me all.'

Here now followeth a summary reckoning up of the worthy deeds of Ruth, which, because they have been fully discoursed of in the former chapter, it would be needless again to insist upon them. Proceed we therefore to Boaz his prayer.

*The Lord recompense thee.* As if he had said, Indeed, Ruth, that courtesy which I afforded thee to glean upon my land without any disturbance, comes far short both of thy deserts and my desires. All that I wish is this, that what I am unable to requite, the Lord himself would recompense. May he give thee a full reward of graces internal, external, eternal, here, hereafter, on earth, in heaven, while thou livest, when thou diest, in grace, in glory, 'a full reward.'

Where first we may learn, that when we are unable to requite people's deserts of ourselves, we must make up our want of works with good wishes to God for them. Indeed, we must not do like those in the second of St James, ver. 16, who only said to the poor, 'Depart in peace, warm yourselves, and fill your bellies,' and yet bestowed nothing upon them. We must not both begin and conclude with good wishes and do nothing else, but we must observe Boaz his method; first, to begin to do good to those that, being virtuous, are in distress; and then, where we fall short in requiting them, to make the rest up with hearty wishes to God for them.

*Obs.* But the main observation is this, there is a recompence of a full reward upon the good works of his servants, Gen. xv. 1. 'Moreover, by them is thy servant taught: and in keeping them there is great reward,' Ps. xix. 11. 'Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth;' 'godliness hath the promises of this life, and of the life to come.'

*Use* 1. It may serve to confute such false spies as raise wrong reports of the land of Canaan, of the Christian profession, saying with the wicked, Mal. iii. 14, 'It is in vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his commandments, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?' Slanderous tongues! which one day shall be justly fined in the star chamber of heaven, *ob scandala magnatum*, for slandering of God's noble servants and their profession; for, indeed, the Christian life is most comfortable, for we may both take a liberal portion, and have a sanctified use of God's creatures; besides, within we have peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost in some measure, one dram whereof is able to sugar the most wormwood affliction.

* French, insatiable appetite.—ED.

*Use* 2. When we begin to feel ourselves to lag in Christianity, let us spur on our affections with the meditation of that full reward which we shall in due time receive; with our Saviour, let us look to 'the joys which are set before us;' and with Moses, let us have 'an eye to the recompence of reward.' Yet so that though we look at this reward, yet also we must look through it and beyond it. This meditation of the reward is a good place for our souls to bait at, but a bad place for our souls to lodge in; we must mount our minds higher, namely, to aim at the glory of God, at which all our actions must be directed, though there were no reward propounded unto them. Yet since it is God's goodness to propound unto us a reward over and besides his own glory, this ought so much the more to incite us to diligence in our Christian calling. For if Othniel, Judges i., behaved himself so valiantly against the enemies of Israel in hope to obtain Achsah, Caleb's daughter, to wife, how valiantly ought we to demean ourselves against our spiritual enemies, knowing that we shall one day be married unto our Saviour in eternal happiness. And this is a full reward.

*Obj.* But some may say, these terms of recompence and reward may seem to favour the popish tenet that our good works merit at God's hand.

*Ans.* Reward and recompence unto our good works are not due unto us for any worth of our own, but merely from God's free favour and gracious promise; for to make a thing truly meritorious of a reward, it is required, first, that the thing meriting be our own, and not another's; now our best works are none of ours, but God's Spirit in us. Secondly, it is requisite that we be not bound of duty to do it; now we are bound to do all the good deeds which we do, and still remain but unprofitable servants. Thirdly, there must be a proportion between the thing meriting and the reward merited; now there is no proportion between our stained and imperfect works (for such are our best) and that infinite weight of glory wherewith God will reward us. It remains, therefore, that no reward is given us for our own inherent worth, but merely for God's free favour, who crowns his own works in us.

*Under whose wings thou art come to trust.* A metaphor; it is borrowed from a hen, which, with her clucking summons together her straggling chickens, and then outstretcheth the fan of her wings to cover them. Familiarly it is used in Scripture, and amongst other places, by our Saviour: Mat. xxiii., 'How oft would I have gathered thee together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?' And just it was with God, because the foolish chickens of the Jews would not come to Christ, the hen, calling them, to suffer them to be devoured by the eagle, the imperial army of the Romans.

*Obs.* God's love and care over his children is as great as a hen's over her chickens. Now the hen's wings do the chickens a double good.

First, they keep them from the kite; so God's providence protecteth his servants from that kite the devil. For as the kite useth to fetch many circuits, and circles, and long hovers and flutters round about, and at length spying her advantage, pops down on the poor chicken for a prey; so the devil, who, as it is, Job i. 7, 'compasseth the earth to and fro, and walketh through it,' and at length spying an opportunity, pitcheth and settleth himself upon some poor soul to devour it, if the wings of God's providence (as the city of refuge) do not rescue him from his clutches.

Secondly, The hen with her chickens* broods her chickens, and makes them thereby to thrive and grow. In summer her wings are a canopy to keep her chickens from the heat of the scorching sun, and in winter they are a mantle to defend them from the injury of the pinching cold; so God's providence and protection makes his children to sprout, thrive, and prosper under it. In prosperity, God's providence keepeth them from the heat of pride; in adversity, it preserveth them from being benumbed with frozen despair.

*Use.* Let us all then strive to run to hide ourselves under the wings of the God of heaven. Hark how the hen clucks in the Psalms, 'Call upon me in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me;' how she clucks in the Canticles, 'Return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may behold thee;' how she clucketh, Mat. vii. 7, 'Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;' how she clucks, Mat. xi., 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you.' Let not us now be like sullen chickens, which sit moping under a rotten hedge, or proating under an old wood pile when the hen calleth them. Let not us trust to the broken wall of our own strength, or think to lurk under the tottering hedge of our own wealth, or wind-shaken reeds of our unconstant friends, but fly to God, that he may stretch his wings over us, as the cherubims did over the mercy-seat. And as always in day-time, so especially at night when we go to bed (for chickens, when going to roost, always run to the hen), let us commend ourselves with prayer to his providence, that he would be pleased to preserve us from the dangers of the night ensuing, 'trusting,' with Ruth in the text, 'under the wings of the Lord God of Israel.'

Vers. 13, 14. *Then she said, Let me find favour in the sight of my lord; for thou hast comforted me, and spoken comfortably unto thy maid, though I be not like to one of thy maids,* &c.

Boaz had formerly called Ruth daughter, now Ruth styleth him lord. When great ones carry themselves familiarly to meaner persons, meaner persons must demean themselves respectively to great ones. Indeed, with base and sordid natures, familiarity breeds contempt; but ingenuous natures will more awfully observe their distance towards their superiors, of



Qu. wings?—ED.

whom they are most courteously entreated. And if great personages should cast up their accounts, they should find themselves not losers, but gainers of honour by their kind usage of their inferiors. Those stars seem to us the greatest, and shine the brightest, which are set the lowest. Great men, which sometimes stoop, and stoop low in their humble carriage to others, commonly get the greatest lustre of credit and esteem in the hearts of those that be virtuous.

*And spoken comfortably unto thy maid.* In Hebrew, *hast spoken unto the heart.* A comfortable speech is a word spoken to the heart.

*Meditation.* Oh that ministers had this faculty of Boaz his speech; not to tickle the ears, teach the heads, or please the brains of the people, but that their sermons might soak and sink to the root of their hearts. But though this may be endeavoured by them, it cannot be performed of them without God's special assistance. We may leave our words at the outward porch of men's ears, but his Spirit must conduct and lodge them in the closet of their hearts.

*Though I be not like to one of thy maids.* Meaning, because she was a Moabitess, a stranger and alien, they natives of the commonwealth of Israel, in this respect she was far their inferior.

*Obs.* The godly ever conceive very humbly and meanly of themselves: Moses, Exod. iv. 10; Gideon, Judges vi. 15; Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 41, Isaiah vi. 5, Jeremiah i. 6; John Baptist, Mat. iii. 11, [Paul,] 1 Tim. i. 15. And the reason hereof is, because they are most privy to and sensible of their own infirmities; their corruptions which cleave unto them are ever before their eyes. These black feet abate their thoughts when puffed up with pride for their painted train of other graces. On the other side, the wicked set ever the greatest price on their own worth; they behold their own supposed virtues through magnifying glasses, and think with Haman, that none deserves better to be honoured by the king but themselves.

*Use.* Let us endeavour to obtain humility with Ruth, a virtue of most worth, and yet which costeth least to keep. Yet, notwithstanding, it is both lawful and needful for us to know our own worth, and to take an exact survey of those graces which God hath bestowed upon us; first, that we may know thereby the better to proportion our thanks to God; secondly, that we may know how much good the church and commonwealth expecteth to be performed by us; and lastly, that if any should basely insult and domineer over us, we may in humility stand upon the lawful justification of ourselves, and our own sufficiency, as St Paul did against the false apostles at Corinth; always provided that we give God the glory, and profess ourselves to be but unprofitable servants.

*And Boaz said unto her, At the meal time come thou hither, and eat of the bread.* Two things herein are commendable in Boaz, and to be imitated by masters of families.

*First,* That he had provided wholesome and competent food for his own servants; so ought all householders to do. And herein let them propound God for their precedent, for he maintaineth the greatest family; all creatures are his servants, and 'he giveth them meat in due season, he openeth his hand, and filleth with his blessing every living thing.'

*Secondly,* As Boaz provided meat for his servants, so he allowed them certain set convenient times wherein they might quietly eat their meat. But as the people of the Jews pressed so fast upon our Saviour, Mark iii. 20, that he had not so much leisure as to eat bread, and take necessary sustenance, so such is the gripple nature of many covetous masters, that they will so task and tie their servants to their work, as not to afford them seasonable respite to feed themselves.

*And dip thy morsel in the vinegar.*

*Obs.* The fare of God's servants in ancient time, though wholesome, was very homely: here they had only bread and vinegar and parched corn. For a thousand five hundred and sixty years the world fed upon herbs, and the Scripture maketh mention since of mean and sparing fare of many godly men. It may therefore confute the gluttony and epicurism of our age, consisting both in the superfluous number of dishes, and in the unlawful nature of them. We rifle the air for dainty fowl, we ransack the sea for delicious fish, we rob the earth for delicate flesh, to suspend the doubtful appetite betwixt variety of dainties. As for the nature of them, many are mere needless whetstones of hunger, which, instead of satisfying, do increase it. And as, in the Spanish inquisition, such is their exquisite cruelty, that having brought one to the door of death by their tortures, they then revive him by cordials; and then again rekilling him with their torments, fetch him again with comfortable things; thus often reiterating their cruelty; so, men, having killed their appetite with good cheer, seek with dishes made for the nonce, to enliven it again, to the superfluous wasting of God's good creatures, and much endamaging the health of their own bodies. But leaving them, let us be content with that competent food which God hath allotted us, knowing, that 'better is a dinner of herbs with peace, than a stalled ox with strife;' and God, if it pleaseth him, can so bless Daniel's pulse unto us, that by mean fare we shall be made more strong and healthful than those who surfeit on excess of dainties.

*And she did eat, and was sufficed.* It is a great blessing of God, when he gives such strength and virtue to his creatures as to satisfy our hunger, and the contrary is a great punishment; for, as 1 Kings i. 1, when they heaped abundance of clothes on aged king David, yet his decayed body felt no warmth at all; so God so curseth the meat to some, that though they cram down never so much into their bellies, yet still their hunger increaseth with their meat, and they find that nature is not truly contented and satisfied therewith.

*And left thereof.* Hence we learn, the overplus which remaineth after we have fed ourselves, must neither be scornfully cast away, nor carelessly left alone, but it must be thriftily kept; imitating herein the example of our Saviour, who, though he could make five loaves swell to sufficient food for five thousand men, yet gave he command that the fragments should be carefully basketed up.

Vers. 15–17. *And when she arose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, Let her gather among the sheaves, and do not rebuke her, &c.*

Before I enter into these words, behold an objection stands at the door of them, which must first be removed.

*Obj.* One may say to Ruth, as our Saviour to the young man in the Gospel, 'One thing is wanting.' Here is no mention of any grace she said to God either before or after meat.

*Ans.* Charity will not suffer me to condemn Ruth of forgetfulness herein. She who formerly had been so thankful to Boaz, the conduit pipe, how can she be thought to be ungrateful to God, the fountain of all favours? Rather, I think, it is omitted of the Holy Spirit to be written down, who, had he registered each particular action of God's saints, as it is, John xxi. 25, 'The world would not have been able to contain the books which should be written.'

Let none, therefore, take occasion to omit this duty because here not specified; rather let them be exhorted to perform it, because in other places it is both commanded by precept and commended by practice, Deut. viii. 10, 1 Cor. x. 31. Yea, in the 27th of the Acts, the mariners and soldiers, people ordinarily not very religious, though they had fasted fourteen days together, yet none of them were so unmannerly, or rather so profane, as to snatch any meat before St Paul had given thanks. Let us therefore be not like Esau, who, instead of giving a blessing to God for his pottage, sold his blessing to his brother for his pottage. But though our haste or hunger be never so great, let us dispense with so much time, as therein to crave a blessing from God, wherein his creatures are sanctified; as no doubt Ruth did, though not recorded.

*And when she arose to glean.* The end of feeding is to fall to our calling. Let us not, therefore, with Israel, sit down to eat and to drink, and so rise up again to play, but let us eat to live, not live to eat. It is not matter, we need not make the clay cottage of our body much larger than it is by immoderate feasting, it is enough if we maintain it so with competent food, that God our landlord may not have just cause to sue us for want of reparations.

*Boaz commanded his servants, saying, Let her gather among the sheaves, and do not rebuke her.*

*Obs.* It is lawful for us, according to our pleasure, to extend our favours more to one than to another. Ruth alone, not all the gleaners, was privileged to gather among the sheaves uncontrolled. Give leave to Jacob to bequeath a double portion to Joseph, his best beloved son; for Joseph to make the mess of Benjamin five times greater than any other of his brethren; for Elkanah to leave a worthier portion to Hannah than to Peninnah: the reason is, because there can be no wrong done in those things which are free favours. I am not less just to him to whom I give less, but I am more merciful to him to whom I give more. Yet in the dealing and distributing of liberality, let those of the family of faith be especially respected; and of these, those chiefly, which, as the apostle saith, are worthy of a 'double honour.'

*Corrollary.* Shall it not, therefore, be lawful for the Lord of heaven to bestow wealth, honour, wisdom, effectual grace, blessings outward and inward on one, and deny them to another? You, therefore, whom God hath suffered to glean among the sheaves, and hath scattered whole handfuls for you to gather; you that abound and flow with his favours, be heartily thankful unto him; he hath not dealt so with every one, neither have all such a large measure of his blessings. And ye common gleaners, who are fain to follow far after, and glad to take up the scattered ears, who have a smaller proportion of his favour, be neither angry with God, nor grieved at yourselves, nor envious of your brethren, but be content with your condition: it is the Lord, and let him do what is good in his eyes. Shall not he have absolute power to do with his own what he thinketh good, when Boaz can command that Ruth, and no other, may glean among the sheaves without rebuke?

Had the servants of Boaz, without express warrant and command from their master, scattered handfuls for her to glean, their action had not been charity, but flat theft and robbery, for they were to improve their master's goods to his greatest profit. On the other side, it had been a great fault to withhold and withdraw anything from her, which their master commanded them to give. Yet, as the unjust steward in Luke made his master's debts to be less than they were, so many servants now-a-days make their masters' gifts to be less than they are, giving less than he hath granted, and disposing less than he hath directed. Men commonly pay toll for passing through great gates, or over common bridges, so when the liberality of masters goeth through the gate of their servants' hands and bridges of their fingers, it is constrained to pay tribute and custom to their servants, before it cometh to those poor to whom it was intended. Thus men make the augmentation of their own estates from the diminution of their masters' bounty.

*Quest.* But some say, Why did not Boaz bestow a quantity of corn upon Ruth, and so send her home unto her mother?

*Ans.* He might have done so, but he chose rather to keep her still a-working. Where we learn, that

is the best charity which so relieves people's wants as that they are still continued at their calling; for as he who teacheth one to swim, though haply he will take him by the chin, yet he expecteth that the learner shall nimbly ply the oars of his hands and feet, and strive and struggle with all his strength to keep himself above water. So, those who are beneficial to poor people, may justly require of them, that they use both their hands to work, and feet to go in their calling, and themselves take all due labour, that they may not sink in the gulf of penury; relieve an husbandman, yet so as that he may still continue in his husbandry; a tradesman, yet so as he may still go on in his trade; a poor scholar, yet so as he may still proceed in his studies: hereby the commonwealth shall be a gainer; drones bring no honey to the hive, but the painful hand of each private man contributes some profit to the public good. Hereby the able poor, the more diligent they be, the more bountiful men will be to them; while their bodies are freed from many diseases, their souls from many sins, whereof idleness is the mother. Laziness makes a breach in our soul where the devil doth assault us with greatest advantage; and when we are most idle in our vocations, then he is most busy in his temptations. A reverend minister was wont to say, that the devil never tempted him more than on Mondays, when, because his former week's task was newly done, and that for the week to come six days distant, he took most liberty to refresh himself.

Since, therefore, so much good cometh from industry, I could wish there were a public vineyard, into which all they should be sent who stand lazing in the market-place till the eleventh hour of the day. Would all poor and impotent were placed in an hospital, all poor and able well-disposed in a workhouse, and the common stocks of the town so laid out, as they thereby might be employed.

*So she gleaned in the field until evening.* The night is only that which must end our labours; only the evening must beg us a play to depart out of the school of our vocation, with promise next morning to return again: 'Man goeth out to his labour until evening.' Let such, then, be blamed, who, in their working, make their night to come before the noon, each day of their labour being shorter than that of St Lucy; and after a spurt in their calling for some few hours, they relapse again to laziness.

*And she threshed what she had gathered.* The materials of the temple were so hewed and carved, both stone and wood, before that they were brought unto Jerusalem, that there was not so much as the noise of an hammer heard in the temple. So Ruth fits all things in readiness before she goes home. What formerly she gleaned, now she threshed, that so no noise might be made at home to disturb her aged mother. Here we see God's servants, though well descended, disdain not any homely, if honest, work for their own living. Sarah kneaded cakes, Rebekah drew water, Rachel fed sheep, Tamar baked cakes. Suetonius reporteth of Augustus Cæsar, that he made his daughters to learn to spin; and Pantaleon relates the same of Charles the Great. Yet now-a-days (such is the pride of the world) people of far meaner quality scorn so base employments.

*And it was about an ephah of barley.* An ephah contained ten omers, Exod. xvi. 36. An omer of manna was the proportion allowed for a man's one day meat. Thus Ruth had gleaned upon the quantity of a bushel; such was her industry, in diligent bestirring herself; Boaz his bounty, in scattering for her to gather; and above all, God his blessing, who gave so good success unto her. Ruth having now done gleaning, did not stay behind in the field, as many now-a-days begin their work when others end; if that may be termed work, to filch and steal, as if the dark night would be a veil to cover their deeds of darkness; but home she hasteneth to her mother, as followeth.

Vers. 18, 19. *And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gathered: also she took forth, and gave to her that which she had reserved when she was sufficed,* &c.

*And she took it up.* See here the shoulders of God's saints are wonted to the bearing of burdens. Little Isaac carried the faggot wherewith himself was to be sacrificed; our Saviour his own cross, till his faintness craved Simon of Cyrene to be his successor. Yet let not God's saints be disheartened; if their Father hath a bottle wherein he puts the tears which they spend, sure he hath a balance wherein he weighs the burdens which they bear; he keeps a note to what weight their burdens amount, and (no doubt) will accordingly comfort them.

Those are to be confuted, who with the scribes, Mat. xxiii. 4, 'Bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on the backs of others; but for their own part they will not so much as touch them with one of their fingers.' Yea, some are so proud that they will not carry their own provender, things for their own sustenance; had they been under Ruth's ephah of barley, with David in Saul's armour, they could not have gone under the weight of it, because never used unto it.

*And her mother-in-law saw what she had gathered.* Namely, Ruth shewed it unto her, and then Naomi saw it. Children are to present to their parents' view all which they get by their own labour; otherwise do many children now-a-days. As Ananias and Sapphira 'brought part of the money, and deposited it at the apostles' feet,' but reserved the rest for themselves; so they can be content to shew to their parents some parcel of their gains, whilst they keep the remnant secretly to themselves.

*Also she took forth, and gave to her.* Learn we from hence, children, if able, are to cherish and feed

their parents, if poor and aged. Have our parents performed the parts of pelicans to us, let us do the duty of storks to them. Would all children would pay as well for the party-coloured coats which their parents do give them, as Joseph did for his, who maintained his father and his brethren in the famine in Egypt. Think on thy mother's sickness, when thou wast conceived, sorrow when thou wast born, trouble when thou wast nursed; she was cold whilst thou wast warm, went whilst thou layest still, waked whilst thou sleptest, fasted whilst thou feddest. These are easier to be conceived than expressed, easier deserved than requited. Say not therefore to thy father according to the doctrine of the Pharisees, *corban*, it is a gift, if thou profitest by me; but confess that it is a true debt, and thy bounden duty, if thou beest able to relieve them. So did Ruth to Naomi, who was but her mother-in-law.

*Which she had reserved when she was sufficed.*

*Obs.* We must not spend all at once, but providently reserve some for afterwards; we must not speak all at once, without Jesuitical reservation of some things still in our hearts, not spend all at once, without thrifty reservation of something still in our hands. Indeed our Saviour saith, 'Care not for to-morrow, for to-morrow shall care for itself;' but that is not meant of the care of providence, which is lawful and necessary, but of the care of diffidence, which is wicked and ungodly. Those are to be blamed, which as Abishai said to David concerning Saul, 'I will strike him but once, and I will strike him no more.' So many men with one act of prodigality, give the bane and mortal wound to their estates, with one excessive feast, one costly suit of clothes, one wasteful night of gaming, they smite their estates under the fifth rib, which always is mortal in Scripture, so that it never reviveth again. But let us spare where we may, that so we may spend where we should; in the seven years of plenty let us provide for the seven years of famine; and to make good construction of our estates, let us as well observe the future as the present tense.

*Then her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day?* These words were not uttered out of jealousy, as if Naomi suspected that Ruth had dishonestly come by her corn (for charity is not suspicious, but ever fastens the most favourable comments upon the actions of those whom it affects); but she did it out of a desire to know who had been so bountiful unto her. Yet hence may we learn, that parents, after the example of Naomi, may and ought to examine their children, how and where they spend their time. For hereby they shall prevent a deal of mischief, whilst their children will be more watchful what company they keep, as expecting with fear at night to be examined. Neither can such fathers be excused, who never say to their children, as David to Adonijah, 'Why doest thou so?' But suffer them to rove and range at their own pleasure. Am I, say they, my son's keeper? he is old enough, let him look after himself.

Now, as for those Joashes, whose Jehoiadas are dead, those young men whose friends and fathers are deceased, who now must have reason for their ruler, or rather grace for their guide and governor, let such know that indeed they have none to ask them as the angel did Hagar, 'Whence comest thou, and whither goest thou?' none to examine them, as Eliab did David, 'Wherefore art thou come down hither?' none to question them, as Naomi did Ruth, 'Where wroughtest thou to-day?' But now, as St Paul said of the Gentiles, that 'having no law, they were a law unto themselves;' so must such young persons endeavour, that having no examiners, they may be examiners to themselves, and at night, accordingly as they have spent their time, either to condemn or acquit their own actions.

*Blessed be he that knew thee.* 1 Kings xxii., the man shot an arrow at unawares, yet God directed it to the chink of the armour of guilty Ahab; but Naomi doth here dart and ejaculate out a prayer, and that at rovers, aiming at no one particular mark, 'Blessed be he that knew thee;' yet, no doubt, was it not in vain, but God made it light on the head of bountiful Boaz, who deserved it.

Learn we from hence, upon the sight of a good deed, to bless the doer thereof, though by name unknown unto us; and let us take heed that we do not recant and recall our prayers, after that we come to the knowledge of his name; as some do, who, when they see a laudable work, willingly commend the doer of it; but after they come to know the author's name (especially if they be prepossessed with a private spleen against him), they fall then to derogate and detract from the action, quarrelling with it as done out of ostentation, or some other sinister end.

*And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought.* Children, when demanded, are truly to tell their parents where they have been; rather let them hazard the wrath of their earthly father, by telling the truth, than adventure the displeasure of their heavenly Father, by feigning a lie. Yet as David, when Achish asked him where he had been? 1 Sam. xxvii. 10, told him, that he had been 'against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites,' when, indeed, he had been the clean contrary way, invading the Geshurites, and Gezrites, and the Amalekites. So many children slap their parents in the mouth with a lie, that they have been in their study, in their calling, in good company, or in lawful recreations, when the truth is, they have been in some drinking-school, tavern, or ale-house, mis-spending of their precious time. And many serve their masters, as Gehazi did the prophet, who, being demanded, answered, 'Thy servant went no whither,' when he had been taking a bribe of Naaman.

*The man's name with whom I wrought to-day, is Boaz.* We ought to know the names of such who are our benefactors. Those are counted to be but basely born who cannot tell the names of their parents; and surely those are but of a base nature who do not know the names of their patrons and benefactors. To blame, therefore, was that lame man cured by our Saviour, John v. 13, of whom it is said, 'And he that was healed knew not the name of him that said unto him, Take up thy bed, and walk.' Yet let not this discourage the charity of any benefactors, because those that receive their courtesies oftentimes do not remember their names; let this comfort them, though they are forgotten by the living, they are remembered in the book of life. The Athenians, out of superstition, erected an altar with this inscription, 'Unto the unknown God;' but we, out of true devotion, must erect an altar of gratitude to the memory, not of our once unknown, but now forgotten benefactors, whose names we have not been so careful to preserve, as Ruth was the name of Boaz: 'And the man's name was Boaz.'

Ver. 20. *And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord, for he ceaseth not to do good to the living, and to the dead. Again Naomi said unto her, The man is near unto us, and of our affinity.*

These words consist of three parts: 1, Naomi's praying for Boaz; 2, her praising of Boaz; 3, her reference and relation unto Boaz. Of the first:

*Blessed be he of the Lord.* The Lord is the fountain from whom all blessedness flows. Indeed Jacob blessed his sons, Moses the twelve tribes, the priests in the law the people; but these were but the instruments, God the principal; these the pipe, God the fountain; these the ministers to pronounce it, God the author who bestowed it.

*For he ceaseth not.*

*Obs.* Naomi never before made any mention of Boaz, nor of his good deeds; but now being informed of his bounty to Ruth, it puts her in mind of his former courtesies. Learn from hence, new favours cause a fresh remembrance of former courtesies. Wherefore, if men begin to be forgetful of those favours which formerly we have bestowed upon them, let us flourish and varnish over our old courtesies with fresh colours of new kindnesses, so shall we recall our past favours to their memories.

*Use.* When we call to mind God's staying of his killing angel, *anno* 1625, let that mercy make us to be mindful of a former, his safe bringing back of our then prince, now king, from Spain; when the pledge of our ensuing happiness was pawned in a foreign country. Let this blessing put us in mind of a former, the peaceable coming in of our gracious sovereign of happy memory, when the bounds of two kingdoms were made the middle of a monarchy. Stay not here, let thy thankfulness travel further: call to mind the miraculous providence of God in defending this land from invasion in '88. On still: be thankful for God's goodness in bringing Queen Elizabeth to the crown, when our kingdom was like the woman in the Gospel, troubled with an issue of blood (which glorious martyrs shed), but staunched at her arriving at the sceptre. We might be infinite at the prosecution of this point: let present favours of God renew the memories of old ones, as the present bounty of Boaz to Ruth made Naomi remember his former courtesies; 'For he ceaseth not to do good to the living and the dead.'

*He ceaseth not.* Our deeds of piety ought to be continued without interruption or ceasing. Some men there be whose charitable deeds are as rare as an eclipse or a blazing star; these men deserve to be pardoned for their pious deeds, they are so seldom guilty of them. With Nabal, they prove themselves by excessive prodigality at one feast; but he deserves the commendation of a good housekeeper, who keeps a constant table, who, with Boaz, ceaseth not to do good.

*To the dead.* The meaning is, to those who now are dead, but once were living, or to their friends and kindred; whence we learn, mercy done to the kindred of the dead is done to the dead themselves. Art thou, then, a widower, who desirest to do mercy to thy dead wife; or a widow, to thy dead husband; or a child, to thy deceased parent? I will tell thee how thou mayest express thyself courteous. Hath thy wife, thy husband, or thy parent, any brother, or kinsman, or friends surviving? Be courteous to them, and in so doing, thy favours shall redound to the dead. Though old Barzillai be incapable of thy favours, let young Chimham taste of thy kindness. Though the dead cannot, need not have thy mercy, yet may they receive thy kindness by a proxy, by their friends that still are living.

Mercy, then, to the dead, makes nothing for the popish purgatory; and yet no wonder if the papists fight for it. It is said of Sicily and Egypt, that they were anciently the barns and granaries of the city of Rome; but now-a-days, purgatory is the barn of the Romish court, yea, the kitchen, hall, parlour, larder, cellar, chamber, every room of Rome. David said, 2 Sam. i. 24, 'Ye daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, which clothed you in scarlet with pleasure, and hanged ornaments of gold upon your apparel;' but should purgatory once be removed, weep pope, cardinals, abbots, bishops, friars, for that is gone which maintained your excessive pride. When Adonijah sued for Abishag the Shunamite, Solomon said to his mother, 'Ask for him the kingdom also;' but if once the protestants could wring from the papists their purgatory, nay, then would they say, Ask the triple crown, cross-keys, St Angelo, Peter's patrimony, and all: in a word, were purgatory taken away, the pope himself would be in purgatory, as not knowing which way to maintain his expensiveness.

*The man is near unto us, and of our affinity.* Naomi never before made any mention of Boaz: some, had they had so rich a kinsman, all their discourse should have been a survey and inventory of their kinsmen's goods, they would have made an occasion at every turn to be talking of them. Well, though Naomi did not commonly brag of her kinsman, yet when occasion is offered, she is bold to challenge her interest in him.

*Obs.* Poor folks may with modesty claim their kindred in their rich alliance. Let not, therefore, great personages scorn and contemn their poor kindred. Camden reports of the citizens of Cork, that all of them in some degrees are of kindred one to the other; but I think that all wealthy men will hook in the cousin, and draw in some alliance one to other: but as they will challenge kindred (where there is none) in rich folks, so they will deny kindred where it is, in poor; yet is there no just reason they should do so. All mankind knit together in the same father in the creation, and at the deluge; I know not who lay higher in Adam's loins, or who took the wall in Eve's belly. I speak not this to pave the way to an anabaptistical party, but only to humble and abate the conceits of proud men, who look so scornful and contemptuous over their poor kindred.

*Use.* Let such as are allied to rich kindred, be heartily thankful to God for them; yet so, as they, under God, depend principally on their own labour, and not on their reference to their friends; and let them not too earnestly expect help from their kindred, for fear they miscarry. A scholar being maintained in the university by his uncle, who gave a basilisk for his arms, and expected that he should make him his heir, wrote these verses over his chimney:

> Falleris aspectu Basiliscum occidere, Plini,
> Nam vitæ nostræ spem Basiliscus alit.

Soon after it happened that his uncle died, and gave him nothing at all, whereupon the scholar wrote these verses under the former:

> Certè aluit, sed spe vanâ; spes vana venenum;
> Ignoscas Plini, verus es historicus.

So soon may men's expectations be frustrated, who depend on rich kindred; yea, I have seen the twine-thread of a cordial friend hold, when the cable-rope of a rich kinsman hath broken.

Let those, therefore, be thankful to God, to whom God hath given means to be maintained of themselves, without dependence on their kindred. Better it is to be the weakest of substances, to subsist of themselves, than to be the bravest accidents, to be maintained by another.

Ver. 21. *And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.*

*He said unto me also.* Ruth perceiving that Naomi kindly resented Boaz his favour, and that the discourse of his kindness was acceptable unto her, proceeds in her relation.

*Doct.* People love to enlarge such discourses which they see to be welcome to their audience.

What maketh tale-bearers so many, and their tales so long, but that such persons are sensible that others are pleasingly affected with their talk? Otherwise, a frowning look, Prov. xxv. 23, will soon put such to silence. When Herod saw, Acts xiii. 3, that the killing of James pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther, to take Peter also. Detractors perceiving that killing of their neighbours' credits is acceptable to others, are encouraged thereby to embrue their tongues in the murdering of more reputations.

Secondly, Whereas Ruth candidly confesseth what favour she found from Boaz, we learn, we ought not sullenly to conceal the bounties of our benefactors, but express it to their honour, as occasion is offered. The giver of alms may not, but the receiver of them may, blow a trumpet.

This confuteth the ingratitude of many in our age; clamorous to beg, but tongue-tied to confess what is bestowed upon them. What the sin against the Holy Ghost is in divinity, that ingratitude is in morality; an offence unpardonable. Pity it is, but that moon should ever be in an eclipse, that will not confess the beams thereof to be borrowed from the sun. He that hath a hand to take, and no tongue to thank, deserves neither hand nor tongue, but to be lame and dumb hereafter.

Observe by the way, that Ruth expresseth what tends to the praise of Boaz, but conceals what Boaz said in the praise of herself. He had commended her, ver. 11, for a dutiful daughter-in-law, and for leaving an idolatrous land; but Ruth is so far from commending herself in a direct line, that she will not do it by reflection, and at the second hand, by reporting the commendations which others gave her.

*Doct.* 'Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth.'

How large are the penmen of the Scripture in relating their own faults; how concise (if at all) in penning their own praises.

It is generally conceived that the Gospel of St Mark was indited by the apostle Peter, and that from his mouth it was written by the hand of John Mark, whose name now it beareth; if so,

Then we may observe that Peter's denying of his Master, with all the circumstances thereof, his cursing and swearing, is more largely related in the Gospel of St Mark than in any other; but as for his repentance, it is set down more shortly there than in other Gospels. Mat. xxvi. 75, 'And he went out and wept bitterly.' Luke xxii. 62, 'And Peter went out and wept bitterly.' But Mark xiv. 72, it is only said, 'When he thought thereon, he wept.' So short are God's servants in giving an account of their own commendations, which they leave to be related by the mouths of others.

*Thou shalt keep fast by my young men.*

*Obj.* Here either Ruth's memory failed her, or else she wilfully committed a foul mistake. For Boaz never bade her to keep fast by his young men, but, ver. 8, 'Abide here fast by my maidens.' It seems she had a better mind to male company, who had altered the gender in the relating of his words.

*Ans.* Condemn not the generation of the righteous, especially on doubtful evidence. Boaz gave a command, ver. 15, to his young men to permit her to glean. She mentioneth them, therefore, in whom the authority did reside, who had a commission from their master, to countenance and encourage her in her extraordinary gleaning, which privilege the maidens could not bestow upon her.

Ver. 22. *And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.*

*And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law.*

*Doct.* It is the bounden duty of parents to give the best counsel they can to their children, as Naomi here prescribes wholesome advice unto her daughter-in-law.

*It is good.* That is, it is better. It is usual, both in the Old and New Testament, to put the positive for the comparative in this kind. Luke x. 42, 'Mary hath chosen that good part,' that is, 'the better part.' 'It is profitable for thee that one of thy members perish, and not thy whole body,' Mat. v. 29. Profitable, that is, 'more profitable.' And as it is expounded, Mat. xviii. 8, better. 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman,' 1 Cor. vii. 1, that is, 'it is better,' it is more convenient, and freer from trouble in time of persecution. 'It is good for thee that thou go out with his maidens,' that is, it is better.

*Doct.* Maids are the fittest company for maids, amongst whom a chaste widow, such as Ruth was, may well be recounted. Modesty is the life-guard of chastity.

*That they meet thee not in any other field.* Here she rendereth a reason of her counsel, because Ruth thereby should escape suspicion or appearance of evil.

*Obj.* What hurt or harm had it been if they had met her in another field? She might have been met there, and yet have departed thence as pure and spotless as she came thither.

*Ans.* It is granted. Yet being a single woman, slanderous tongues and credulous ears meeting together, had some colour to raise an ill report on her reputation. Besides, being a Moabite, she ought to be more cautious of her credit, lest, as she was a stranger, she might be taken for a 'strange woman' in Solomon his sense. And therefore, *Nimia cautela non nocet*, in some ears it is not enough to be honest, but also to have *testes honestatis;* many a credit having suffered, not for want of clearness, but clearing of itself, surprised on such disadvantages.

Ver. 23. *So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz, to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest, and dwelt with her mother-in-law.*

*So she kept by the maidens of Boaz.* Here was good counsel well given, because thankfully accepted and carefully practised.

*Doct.* It is the duty of children to follow the advice of their parents.

We meet with two examples in wicked persons which in this respect may condemn many undutiful children of our days. The one Ishmael, who, though he be characterised to be 'a wild man,' Gen. xvi. 12, 'His hand against every man, and every man's hand against him,' yet it seems his hand was never against his mother Hagar, whom he obeyed in matters of most moment, in his marriage, Gen. xxi., 'His mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.'

The second is Herodias,* of whom no good at all is recorded save this alone, that she would not beg a boon of her father Herod, until first she went in to her mother Herodias to know what she should ask. How many now-a-days make deeds of gift of themselves without the knowledge and consent of their parents?

*Unto the end of barley harvest.* Commendable is the constancy and the continuance of Ruth in labour. Many there are who at the first have a ravenous appetite to work, but quickly they surfeit thereof. Ruth gleans one day so as she may glean another; it is the constant pace that goeth farthest and freest from being tired: Mat. xxiv. 13, 'But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.'

*And dwelt with her mother-in-law.* It was Christ's counsel unto his disciples, Mat. x. 11, to 'abide in the place wherein they did enter,' and not to go from house to house. Such the settledness of Ruth; where she first fastened there she fixed, she dwelt with her mother. Naomi affords Ruth house-room, Ruth gains Naomi food; Naomi provides a mansion, Ruth purveys for meat; and so mutually serve to supply the wants of each other.

If envy, and covetousness, and idleness, were not the hindrances, how might one Christian reciprocally be a help unto another? All have something, none have all things; yet all might have all things in a comfortable and competent proportion, if seriously suiting themselves as Ruth and Naomi did, that what is defective in one might be supplied in the other.

* Qu. 'Salome'? So she is called by Josephus.—ED.

END OF FULLER ON RUTH.

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